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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Delegates Briefed on Israeli Nuclear Assurances

JN0904193496 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 9 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League held an emergency meeting at the level of permanent representatives in Cairo today to discuss the dangers posed by radiation leakage from the Dimona reactor.

The Arab League secretary general stressed the need for international supervision and inspection of this Israeli reactor. He sent messages in this regard to the UN Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Jordanian representative briefed the Arab League Council on the Jordanian Government's contacts and measures to ascertain the status of this reactor. He also briefed the conferees on the results of laboratory tests which revealed nothing unusual either in the soil or in the water.

The Jordanian representative conveyed to the Arab League Council the assertions the Jordanian Government received from the Israeli side denying any radiation leakage from the Dimona reactor.

Inter-Arab Affairs: League Issues Resolution on Israeli Nuclear Reactors

NC1004072596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2120 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Apr (MENA)—Following an emergency meeting today on the envoys' level, the Arab League Council decided to contact the international community and the permanent members of the UN Security Council to highlight the threat posed by Israel's nuclear armament and the grave dangers this spells for the security of the Arab and other countries in the region.

In its resolution, the Council called for liquidating the Israeli nuclear weapons arsenal in preparation for making the region free of weapons of mass destruction. It also demanded that Israel be obliged to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT].

The resolution noted the importance of drawing the attention of the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] to the latent and possible dangers from a radiation leak from the Israeli Dimona reactor and other Israeli reactors in the absence of any international supervision of the Israeli nuclear program and because of Israel's continuing refusal to join the NPT.

The Arab League Council called on the Security Council and the concerned international organizations — including the IAEA and the UN Environment Program — to conduct immediate technical tests of the level of radiation at the Dimona reactor so as to assess the possible dangers from such a radioactive leak and its threat to the environment, life, and underground water of the region. It also called on the concerned international and Arab bodies to ensure the safety of all aspects of the environment in the region through constant periodic inspection measures.

The Arab League Council resolution also asked the council of Arab ministers responsible for environmental affairs to raise the issue of the environmental dangers of the Dimona reactor on international forums.

The resolution stressed the importance of helping the state of Palestine train cadres in the technology of taking preventive measures against radiation and equipping these cadres with the necessary equipment to carry out their task.

The resolution also highlighted its support for efforts to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, as this would be the best way to achieve security and stability for all the countries of the region. The resolution called on the Arab League member states to exchange information and coordinate with regard to the Israeli nuclear program and any other issues that concern the Israeli nuclear facilities and the current and future dangers resulting from these activities and facilities.

Inter-Arab Affairs: League Head on Emergency Meeting, Israel's Nuclear Program

NC1004073996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2200 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Apr (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has asserted that the resolution issued by the Arab League Council following an emergency session today on the dangers of atomic radiation from Israel's Dimona reactor highlights the gravity of the situation and warns of its consequences and dangers. He said there must be vigilance vis-a-vis the Israeli nuclear dangers.

Speaking at a news conference following the Council meeting, he said the Council asked the Secretariat General to follow up the issue with the Arab group at the United Nations and to contact friendly and nonaligned countries and the permanent members of the Security Council to brief them on its seriousness.

He noted that today's emergency session was held with most member states supporting the demand of the state of Palestine to meet to discuss nuclear radiation.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid reiterated the Arab countries' support for the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], its objectives, and the need to make it global without exception.

He warned of the dangers resulting from Israel's continuing refusal to joint the NPT and the development of its nuclear program outside the system of the International Atomic Energy Agency's supervision. He expressed his belief that the comprehensive, lasting, and just peace in the Middle East cannot be complete without making the region free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Arab League secretary general welcomed the African countries' signing of a treaty to render the African continent free of weapons of mass destruction.

He said the Arab League Council heard at its meeting today a full report from the chairman of the Arab Atomic Energy Authority on the instructions of the Arab League Secretariat General. The scientific report, he added, gave a full explanation of all aspects of the issue.

Concluding, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said the Council also discussed a request from the Arab Health Ministers Council on taking a stand on the meeting of the International Pharmacists Union in Jerusalem in September. The Council decided not to attend this conference and called on the friendly countries to boycott it.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Iraqi League Delegate Says U.S. Seeks 'To Eliminate' Arab Weapons

JN0904182896 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1500 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Apr (INA)—Dr. Nabil Najm, Iraqi permanent representative to the Arab League, accused the United States of pursuing a policy that is hostile toward Iraq and the Arab nation, and that is based on double standards.

In statements to Arab and foreign reporters on the sidelines of an emergency meeting of the Arab League Council to discuss the dangers posed by Zionist weapons, Dr. Najm added that the United States supports the Zionist entity and encourages it to acquire mass destruction weapons in general, and nuclear weapons in particular to force a fait accompli on the Arabs and jeopardize their pan-Arab and national security.

Dr. Najm went on to say: The United States seeks to eliminate Arab weapons, which are limited in number and used for self-defense. It is pursuing some Arab states in this regard citing the so-called international legitimacy. Meanwhile, it is providing optimal assistance to the Zionist entity and encouraging it to acquire nuclear weapons. It is also providing it with a cover to wriggle out of its international commitments.

Dr. Najm said: The international community and the Security Council are required to deal firmly with the Zionist entity's nuclear and military capabilities. They should not use double standards, as is happening with Iraq and some Arab states.

Dr. Nabil Najm cited Security Council Resolution 687 and particularly Paragraph 14 of this resolution, which stipulates that the measures to be enforced against Iraq will ensure the creation of a Middle East that is free of mass destruction weapons.

Dr. Najm urged the Arab states to call upon the Security Council to honor its international commitments and obligations as enshrined in the aforesaid resolution. The Arab states should urge the Security Council not to tilt in favor of the Zionist entity, because this would allow it to threaten the region without expecting deterrence or restraints.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Senior' PA Officials Say Draft of New Charter Completed

TA0904121396 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 9 Apr 96 p 4

[Report by Roni Shaqed, David Regev, and ITIM]

[FBIS Translated Text] A special committee set up by Salim al-Za'nun, deputy chairman of the Palestine National Council [PNC], is currently holding consultations in a bid to draft a new Palestinian Charter. Sources in Gaza said that the committee has just started its work and so far has raised several drafts and proposals, but has not consolidated the final version of the new clauses.

The final draft will be submitted by the committee to the special PNC session which will apparently be held in late April. At present it looks as though the main clauses to be submitted by the drafting committee are the following: — Palestine is the state of the Palestinian people whose borders will be those stipulated in the Oslo accord. — Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian state. — The right of return will also include the 1948 refugees.

It should be noted that the committee has still not reached the formulation of the clause dealing with the acceptance of the state of Israel.

Senior Palestinian Authority [PA] officials who are identified with the peace process, however, disseminated over the last few days a report according to which the committee has already reached the final draft of the new Palestinian Charter.

They claim that the final draft includes 17 clauses, among them the Palestinians' right to exist honorably alongside Israel, and Israel's right to a peaceful and secure existence. Another clause emphasizes the linkage and proximity between the Palestinian people and Jordan.

The first clause of the draft says that "Palestine is the state of the Palestinian people and is an inseparable part of the Arab nation."

The second clause says that "the Palestinian state's political system is republican, based on honoring the rule of law and recognizing both the law and the Palestinian Charter in their letter and spirit."

The third clause says that "Islam is the religion of the state and the Arab language is the official language."

The sixth clause is the first one relating to Israel: "The coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli nations is an irreversible situation based on each side's recognition of the other's security and on honoring its traditions and customs."

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat To Present New Cabinet 10 Apr

TA0904135696 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 8 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Nasir al-Rimawi in Ramallah and 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Arna'ut in Jerusalem]

[FBIS Translated Text] Reliable sources stated to AL-AYYAM yesterday that the Legislative Council will be convened on Wednesday [10 April] and Thursday at the premises of the Ministry of Education and Higher Learning in the Ramallah and al-Birah Governorates where the council's 11 committees will begin their work.

Legislative Council member Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir told AL-AYYAM that at the last council meeting the members were officially notified that President Yasir 'Arafat will present to them the makeup of the new Palestinian Government on 10 April. 'Abd-al-Qadir affirmed that the council will refer several urgent issues to the 11 relevant committees for discussion.

Internal council regulations stipulate that the president must present the makeup of the government five weeks after the first council meeting, which was held on 7 March.

Palestinian Affairs: Mosad Said Planning To Liquidate Palestinian Figures Abroad

TA0904161696 Ramallah AL-BILAD in Arabic 7 Apr 96 pp 1, 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Nicosia, QUDS PRESS — An authorized Palestinian source has said that Israel is making preparations to carry out assassination operations against figures in the Palestinian opposition who are believed to be connected to the wave of bombings that erupted in Israel in recent weeks.

The source, who is close to the Palestinian opposition, affirmed that prominent officials in the opposition received warnings from friendly Arab and European parties about the determination of Mosad to carry out a series of liquidations against prominent figures in the opposition shortly before the Israeli elections, slated for 29 May. This would be considered a security feat for the Israeli Government and would contribute to raising the value of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' stock. The source said that Palestinian opposition officials, together with PLO figures opposed to the Oslo accord, have recently begun to adopt security precautions, especially during their travels abroad, out of fear of assassination attempts.

The source said that preliminary information indicates that three special Israeli groups have arrived in a Middle Eastern capital and in two European capitals in order to prepare for these operations. In statements following the recent bombings in Israel, Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq did not rule out the possibility that his country would carry out assassinations in Arab countries against those who Israel believes are acting in Palestinian opposition groups and who might have a link to recent developments.

According to the Palestinian source, who preferred to remain anonymous, the Mosad has requested from Arab and Western security services information about Palestinian opposition organizations. The source said that the Mosad is currently collecting information about specific figures, who are believed to be targets of assassination, in retaliation for the military attacks by Islamic Palestinian resistance movements which have taken the lives of at least 60 Israelis.

The source pointed out that the apprehension stems from the fact that the United States has given Israel the green light to carry out liquidation operations against Palestinian opposition figures, including those working in the diplomatic corps. He said that this issue was discussed in detail at the recent visit by CIA Director John Deutch to Israel. The source pointed out that Washington has placed at Israel's disposal information, especially about the movements of Palestinian opposition leaders abroad.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Sets Up Committee for Dialogue With PLO Opposition

JN1004073796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat named a committee for dialogue with the PLO-affiliated opposition factions.

The committee is headed by al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim and includes Nabil 'Amr and Sulayman al-Shurafa. It was established on the basis of a decision by the Council of Ministers on 6 April.

Algeria

Algeria: FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS0904125696 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 2 Apr 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe" — quotation marks as received; double parentheses denote source's use of brackets; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Editorial —

Inventing myths and questioning the reality by them!

Praise be to Allah!

Journalists who are remote from a given situation, or who are working for particular groups of interest which do not hesitate to use lies and disinformation to reach their objectives, are known to be in the business of developing myths and then questioning any events that may come up in relation with that situation, in accordance with the myth they have invented themselves. The myths developed this way are widely accepted when they are in harmony with the collective imaginary erected by years of public ignorance, misinformation, opinion control, propaganda and distance from the given situation or subject.

Nowadays it has become hard to draw the line between news reflecting a reality on the ground from news filtered through the "myths creation lenses", or more simply the line between disinformation or propaganda and information.

Last week an incident took place which, according to the French official authorities, was of a "banditism" nature and in which four robbers died in Roubais (France) and their fifth man in Belgium. Three men were identified as being of Algerian and Marocain origins, while a fourth one, by the name of Christophe Caze, was a Frenchman of a European descent. The story may have been the usual piece of everyday news one may read in the internal pages of papers if it was not snatched by the "myths inventors" in the French media.

According to their myth, Islam (ic),(ist),(etc..) implies criminality, so this time they tried to "prove" that criminality implies Islam! They started "playing" with the minds of the public via questioning the French authorities: "didn't you say that those who were killed have names like Amar, Said and Rachid? They are Muslims obviously aren't they? And more alarming didn't you find a copy of the Koran when you assaulted the place? Isn't that enough to prove without any doubt that they are Islamists, fundamentalists therefore terrorists? Ok, you got a point not all who have a Koran at home are terrorists, but how about the rumour that in the fire debris a copy of newsletters of FIS supporters was found? Doesn't that make them definitely terrorists? Yes Ok, the Algerian people have voted FIS twice before the military decided to ban it, but taking arms against the military responsible for the state, isn't it terrorism? Ok, it is a matter of opinion, but concerning the puzzle of the fifth man Christophe Caze, you ought to know that it is definitely solved! We know for sure from an anonymous source who said he knows someone who knows someone who knows someone...who told him that in fact CHRISTOPHE has been converted to Islam a long time ago! So no matter what you say or try to prove we will please our boss and/or increase the volume of our sales, and we will put the story under the title: "terrorism"!.

Unfortunately these "cultivators of hatred" are not alone in the field. They do not find any official reactions from Muslims regimes but encouragement and help (((mis)information providing)) from many of them. The goal of the regimes which have got a direct interest in a tarnished image of Islam under the cover of fighting "terrorism", is to eradicate Islamic movements which have become serious political contesters to power and a lethal challenger of their dictatorship!

A myth is a myth no matter how big it may be. It is like a snowball descending a mountain and increasing in volume until it hits the solid, concrete and warmer ground of reality. The ground stays ground and the snowball disintegrates and melts away!

Political commentary on events in Algeria:

Justice is the key to long lasting stability!

Algeria has entered its fifth year of war with little hope if not a despair for it to end soon. By putting aside fantasist statements of a propaganda nature, which has moved from that of "these 'terrorists' are just a dozen of them at most and it should not take more than few days to neutralise!" in January 1992, to that of "there remain only a residual 'terrorism' that will be eradicated soon!" in December 1995. In between these random dates, more than seventy thousand Algerians died as a direct consequence of this war. Tens of thousands have been subjected to physical and mental torture, tens of thousands have known concentration camps in the Sahara, thousands of political prisoners are in jail. To those direct victims of the war, one must add the "indirect victims" such as families and relatives of the first victims and which are many times greater in number.

Could Algeria have taken any other path? Only Allah knows. However it is unanimously accepted that the principal cause of this lasting tragedy is the selfish urge to hang to power no matter what. This has "paralysed" any real and badly needed political initiative while opening doors to "wrong and late solutions" resulting from "wrong and superficial diagnosis" of the situation.

Many Algerian people saw in the elections of November 95 the only opportunity made available during all this time and which may end the severe crisis. However, since these elections for which Gen. Zeroual got away with what he wanted, the military regime put politics back into "hibernation" and nothing of relevance came from it these past five months. Nevertheless, Algeria has known few significant events not deprived from the regimes attempt to influence. Internally, there were the "palace coup" inside the FLN party from which some observers saw an unfinished yet battle between those trying to keep the party in the opposition and honouring the "national contract" agreement, and those pushing toward the FLN old role of "le party du pouvoir" ("the authorities party"). There were also the FFS congress which has shown some kind of faithfulness in its general line, but moreover, its reelected leader has come up with the suggestion of a "national conference for peace". Events of an external origin, which may be significant to mention these past five months, is the declared alignment of the U.S. policy toward Algeria with that of France. Basing the argument on official declarations and without taking into consideration what it was or was not said in the "corridors" of Charm-el-cheikh and Washington conferences to the foreign minister Attaf, the U.S. position was recently declared during the visit of the U.S. assistant secretary of state Robert Pelletreau to Algeria, and by the U.S. ambassador to Algiers Donald Newman, in a press conference given last week (26/03/96). The first summarised the position emphasising on "the need for a real national reconciliation" and by "relating tangible democratic progress with economical assistance", while the second revealed that the content of President Clinton's letter to Gen. Zeroual dealt with the "necessity of enlarging the political base". These have been the noticeable events and positions of the last five months characterised by a total "political anesthesia" from the regime.

Gen. Zeroual has apparently come out of his "political hibernation" and has "invited" many "historical", "political" and "social" personalities to "exchange views" about the situation in Algeria. In the actual context of immobilism, this "initiative" is taken as "the event of the season" by some "enthusiastic commentators". One sincerely hopes their enthusiasm is well founded! The list of names "selected" by Gen. Zeroual contains criminals responsible for the actual bloodbath, notorious thieves responsible for "sucking" public funds for decades, incompetent top economical managers responsible for the bankruptcy direction(s) Algeria has been "guided to", opportunists and immoral "political chameleons" fascinated by the "beauty of the power chair" above anything else,etc... but praise be to Allah, the list also contains true Mujahidin of the war against the French colonialism and true nationalists.

In Algeria if all those who have joined the maquis during the war against the French colonialism (before and after 19/03/1962) as well as some who have not, are all officially called "Mujahidin", the Algerian people have been, classifying them without mercy, into categories based on their post-independence behavior more than what may have been written in any golden official register about their past. Cases of Algerian people turning their one time veneration into total disappointment after seeing some of those "heroes of the war" behaving like "mere mercenaries" running ups and downs to appropriate for free as much as possible of wealth and power ranging from pubs and bars to the highest positions in the country's political, administrative and economical sectors... in recompense for these "Mujahidin's" "jihad"! The most significant illustration of the people's love/repulsion change may be that which has happened about ten years ago in the Casbah of Algiers. The authorities had unjustly dealt with the inhabitants. These later were about to revolt. The regime wanted to use a hero of the "battle of Algiers" as a "fireman" to diffuse the situation. This hero, having in that particular case chosen to side up with the "powerful injustice", was sent back by the people of the Casbah shouting "Ya El Khain" (the traitor) allusion to an alleged treason dated as far back as 1958, as well as to the fact that according to the people he has changed and was siding now with the new oppressor. The case was related to an acute housing problem and amongst the people concerned was the lonely mother of another hero by the name of Ali La Pointe. She later died in her same old room, forgotten by his sons, brothers in arms, who were too busy running after worldly matters. Amongst the people who confronted the hero sent by the "powerful Injustice" were authentic Mujahidin (fidai), whose names may not have been in the golden official register, but who have "signed their names in every street of the cities and every mountain and plain of the countryside with their blood and bullets". They are very well known to the local people. At the independence they have come back to their people, taking their usual place with the satisfaction of someone having done his/her duty. They are still venerated by their people. As for those who have always looked at the colons and secretly envying their lifestyle and arrogance, they could not help to take the place of Algeria's old masters as soon as they were gone. The Algerian people also could not help to feel about them the same way they felt about the old arrogant masters, if not worse, given the heavy sacrifice paid collectively for independence.

The same also applied to the political leaders. They are those who have chosen to "die in the opposition" rather than to have sold whatever capital of "historicity" they may have accumulated during the period of "real test". Others have forgotten from where they came from, and for what they were struggling for, and have joined the theatrical show of "how to dupe the Algeria people while getting rich and powerful". A show which has been continuously played since 1962, except for a small "disturbance" between 1988 and 1991.

So, coming back to Gen. Zeroual's "guest list", it does contain names of authentic Mujahidin and nationalists who have not changed nor tarnished their reputation by "post-independence greediness". It is they, from whom any hope of wisdom for the good of Algeria can still come up. They do not only understand the motivation of those in the maquis today but most importantly they know the determination and feelings of those who have chosen to leave the comfort of their home and the affection of the beloved ones, without looking behind, in order to fight injustice, no matter how powerful this may seem. They have been there before and they also know from experience that no matter how immovable the "dogmatic entrenchment" of the arrogant side, the final world for real long lasting peace can only come from the side which took the challenge to fight injustice!

In this Gen. Zeroual's initiative, the positions of authentic Mujahidin and nationalists and how long they will "stay in the game", will be monitored closely by the Algerian people. They have not cheated on the Algerian people so far, how can they do that at the end of a fulfilled life? They will incha Allah not take part in any deceiving operation the regime may be tempted to use them for, such as showing to the world that there is a real broadening of the political base, or taking constructive ideas from the opposition and denuding them from their contents until they become useless hollow slogans.

As for the criminals, thieves and opportunists, they are either a brake for Algeria or just good for the decor.

Egypt

Egypt: MENA Reports Mubarak CNN Interview

NC1004065396 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2300 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Apr (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has called on the United States to try to find a peaceful settlement to its most recent problem with Libya. The United States recently accused Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi of setting up a secret chemical weapons plant in an underground Libyan installation.

President Mubarak said in an interview today, broadcast today on the U.S. television station CNN, that there is a need for more evidence to confirm this accusation.

The president added: Let us try to learn the reality and what we can do to avoid any military measures, because military action in this part of the world will create problems for the United States and other countries.

In his interview with CNN, President Husni Mubarak said: Egypt had heard of no Libyan plans for chemical weapons until I met U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry, who informed me that Libyan officials are setting up a new [as received] chemical weapons factory. He also briefed me on the project's plans.

The president added: I asked Perry to give me all the information and details.

The president expressed his willingness to investigate this information, since there is no evidence of chemical weapons inside Libya.

He noted that if all the information is made available he will meet al-Qadhdhafi and discuss with him the possibility of sending experts, not only from Egypt, but from other sides, to inspect what is being labeled as a chemical weapons factory. We are opposed to chemical weapons and their production, Mubarak said. We are calling for turning the region into a region free of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons and will exert every effort in this regard.

Asked what Egypt can do if the United States does take military action against Libya, President Mubarak said: We are opposed to any military action in this part of the world and we will do all we can to stop it.

In this regard, he noted: If there are chemical weapons in Libya, we will cooperate with Libya to get rid of these weapons in that factory. We will stop the processing of such chemicals, particularly since the Libyans will sign a treaty next February on nuclear and chemical weapons. He said he objects to the use of force in settling this issue.

With regard to President Mubarak's view of the character of Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, a man he has known a long time, the president said: I believe that al-Qadhdhafi has changed completely from the first time I met him. There used to be a terrorist group in Libya, something I heard of before I met al-Qadhdhafi in 1989. Since the first time I met him and explained to him the dangers of housing a terrorist organization in Libya, al-Qadhdhafi has changed. He now displays great understanding of the situation.

President Mubarak expressed his belief that al-Qadhdhafi is now much more flexible than ever. He pointed out that al-Qadhdhafi is a very good listener, saying: When we ask him to look into an issue, such as chemical weapons in al-Rabitah, he does not object to our going to the location and seeing what happens there. Nor does he mind if we give him advice. Al-Qadhdhafi is now much better than ever.

Asked his view of the usefulness of imposing U.S. sanctions on Sudan, as some U.S. circles are demanding, if Sudan does not hand over those accused of involvement in the failed attempt to assassinate President Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995, the president answered: We will agree to the imposition of sanctions on Sudan following the events of 26 June 1995. But the question here is: What sort of sanctions? He added: We have our own policy on this issue. We are against the partition of Sudan. I received a message from President Bill Clinton this morning asking for my cooperation on the resolution presented to the Security Council on this issue. The president said: We will agree to any sanctions, but one, namely sanctions on weapons, because such sanctions would mean that northern Sudan would not have the opportunity to buy weapons to defend the State, while those in the south could buy weapons anywhere. This might bring about Sudan's partition, which we reject, something we will refuse to allow to happen.

Asked what concrete steps the international community could take to prevent terrorism and his accusation that Sudan and Iran are exporting terrorism, President Mubarak said: I remember speaking about terrorism in 1986. I have oft spoken about terrorism as an international phenomenon and about Iran's connections in my speeches at the United Nations and in Europe and elsewhere.

The president added: Sudan became involved in this issue recently. I believe the international community must hold a conference on the level of heads of states to discuss this issue and punish any state that encourages terrorism. Leaving these countries to do what they like will create many problems, not only against the interests of the countries in the region, but also against the interests of other countries, such as the United States, Europe, and others.

Asked about the tangible developments resulting from the Sharm al-Shaykh peacemakers summit, President Mubarak reiterated that the summit was held on the basis of events in Israel and the deterioration in the Palestinian area. He added: This is why I contacted President Bill Clinton and proposed a summit. The U.S. President agreed. He then said: At the peacemakers summit the first point we discussed was the peace process—the core issue. Security measures were the second point we discussed and condemnation of terrorism the third.

President Mubarak went on to say: When it comes to condemning terrorism, this condemnation is not confined to terrorism in Israel, but involves terror there and anywhere else.

President Mubarak expressed his belief that the peacemakers summit helped stop the deterioration between Israel and the Palestinians. He said: As a result of this summit we must continue our work.

He noted that he discussed the issue of the closure of Israel to the Palestinians with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and other leaders and that the issue was also discussed at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

President Mubarak expressed his belief that the Israeli side understood the extent of the closure's effects on the Palestinians, that Prime Minister Peres — who is fighting the next elections — is facing difficulty, and that President 'Arafat is doing his best and can do more.

As for peace between Israel and Syria, President Mubarak said: I said several days ago that the current situation is not good. He noted in this regard the freezing of negotiations between Israel and the Syrians in addition to the statements exchanged by the two sides, wherein the Israelis say they will not leave the Golan, while the Syrians say the Israelis are not proceeding sincerely with the peace process.

The president stressed that the exchange of these statements — sometimes made for local consumption — affects the other side. He said: If this situation remains as it is until the Israeli elections are held, we will then be nearer the U.S. elections and possible change there, and this would require more power to resume the negotiations.

As for the effect on the peace process of the Israeli elections at the end of May, President Mubarak said: We will address this issue with any Israeli Government. We have very good relations with Shim'on Peres, Mubarak added.

Mubarak continued: But we do not interfere in the elections in Israel and do not try to back the Likud Bloc or the Labor Party.

In this regard, he said Egypt will talk to any government the Israeli people elect.

On whether the Israeli elections will harm the Middle East peace process, President Mubarak said the peace process will move forward whether with the Labor Party or the Likud Bloc.

He added: I believe the peace process will continue. I am not worried that the peace process will end. But in light of current events I believe that freezing the negotiations is a very bad move indeed.

In his interview with CNN, President Husni Mubarak expressed his optimism with regard to resuming the peace negotiations.

He said: There is no alternative, but to proceed with this process to solve the problems, because military action has not solved this or any other problem.

He added that nothing but negotiations can solve problems. In this regard, he pointed out that after Egypt realized the 6 October victory, former President Anwar al-Sadat launched his initiative and the Camp David treaty and peace agreement were signed.

President Mubarak expressed his belief that the Syrians realize all this very well, as do the Lebanese, the Palestinians, and the Jordanians.

With regard to the real internal challenges facing the Egyptian Government, President Husni Mubarak said that to a large extent these challenges basically stem from the high population. He noted that the increase in population is a problem for Egypt.

He added that this problem will become much more complicated. This is why the government is exerting concerted efforts to address it.

He pointed out that with the drop in the birth rate the health of the Egyptian child is now better. Perhaps this explains why there are now more people in Egypt.

President Mubarak clarified that the birth rate is falling. He said: We are taking serious steps in this direction because rearing children can help progress and development in Egypt.

President Husni Mubarak went on to say: We encourage those with funds to participate in projects. We extend this encouragement to them through the granting of free land and the provision of all the basic utilities so as to help achieve a better future for the young generation. He added that this encouragement is not confined to those with large amounts of money, but extends to those with small capital. He referred to a visit to he made to Upper Egypt and his meeting with a college graduate, who, with his brothers, all college graduates, has set up a small factory to produce chocolates. He told how they started with one machine and expanded. He said: We try to encourage investment to create jobs. We are doing our best to help them get jobs and earn a livelihood.

President Mubarak added: Reports that we are not encouraging investment are not true. As for economic reform, we carried out the most difficult part of it in the past two years. We are now proceeding with the implementation of other projects in line with privatization. He noted that the State has faced difficulties from the start but things are now proceeding naturally. He added: I believe we are satisfied with the economic reforms.

On terrorism, President Mubarak said: This is nothing new. The Muslim Brotherhood was established in 1928 and violent acts began then, although in a more restricted way. They assassinated a judge called al-Khazandar and then a former prime minister. They tried to assassinate late President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir and also assassinated late President Anwar al-Sadat. They continue with this policy. He noted that this phenomenon is not limited to Egypt, but is present everywhere.

President Mubarak went on to say: The State began a dialogue with these people under President al-Sadat. But they exploited the opportunity for dialogue to boost their strength. When they started to carry out violent acts and kill innocent people in the streets, the need arose to reply violently in accordance with the law.

On human rights in Egypt, President Mubarak said: Regarding reports about human rights violations, there might be some who carry out such violations but we do have a judiciary system. Anyone who says there are human right violations by any soldier, policeman, or civilian can go to court. He added: There is a judiciary system and we cannot interfere with its work.

On terrorism's links with poverty, President Mubarak said: Poverty is not confined to Egypt. No country has citizens who are all rich. We do not believe the poor always lean toward terrorism. He added that terrorism emanates from funds, that is, those with funds activate these elements and provide them with funds to plant bombs here and there. He noted that all those who were detained by the police and tried by the courts confirmed that they received these funds to detonate a bomb here or there.

President Mubarak described those involved in terrorist actions as lacking any deep understanding of religion and noted that not all of them are Muslims, but belong to various other religions too. He said that many who killed or caused explosions were tempted by money though they were working and earning a livelihood.

On choosing a vice president, President Mubarak said the Egyptian Constitution stipulates that the People's Assembly speaker take over the post for 60 minutes when the president dies. He added that there is no problem if the parliament is dissolved, since the chairman of the Constitutional Court will take over the post in that case.

Egypt: Musa Makes Statement to Parliamentarians on Peace Process, Regional Issues

NC1004054596 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1810 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Apr (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that the current stage holds many risks and many clear threats. He said the peace process is going through a period of tension and can perhaps be described as a period of reversal or, at least, slowness. This slowness and fragility, he said, is worrying as it may negatively affect the region and its future.

Musa was making a statement to the joint meeting for the People's Assembly's Foreign Relations Committee, Arab Affairs Committee, and Defense and National Security Committee. The meeting was attended by Kamal al-Shadhili, minister of state for the affairs of the People's Assembly and the Consultative Council.

The foreign minister said: As regards the Palestinian track, which is a basic track, the general impression is that it is threatened. A number of measures that have been taken negatively affect the credibility of this track. The issue is not the use of violence, although it is a serious thing because it changes the general atmosphere of the peace process.

He said it was possible for the peace process to continue, but the operations [not further specified] hindered this track, negatively affected the free movement of the Palestinian administration, and raised talk about various options to be added to or to replace the Palestinian option.

Musa added: On the Israeli side, the Palestinian administration is being accused of failure to perform its duty as envisioned by Israel. We cannot blame Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat or the Palestinian administration. It is the responsibility of both the Palestinians and the Israelis to prepare the atmosphere.

He asked: Who loses or wins when the negotiations stop? He pointed out that the loser is the Palestinian side. The Israeli side, he added, has to prepare the right atmosphere to make progress on this track. He said the policy of closure and siege against the Palestinian territory and people represents a collective punishment that is illegal and unjustified. This siege may starve the Palestinian people, and this is unacceptable, he said.

The foreign minister said the issue is not humanitarian, as it is being portrayed — such as allowing some food shipments or allowing some workers to enter. He said the Palestinian cause is not a humanitarian or economic cause; it is essentially political, and without progress toward a solution, no comprehensive peace can be achieved. We cannot be convinced that a comprehensive peace can be established if the Palestinians are not granted their right to self-determination, he said.

The foreign minister said: There is a siege, there is a retraction, and the Israeli army is entering Palestinian villages. We strongly warn against this retraction; this is a waste of time, and we may not be able to reach what we hope for at the right time.

The foreign minister said that it is clear that violence is in nobody's interest. No one wants to lose innocent victims to acts of violence, which have been and still are being carried out by both sides, he said.

Musa added: It is our collective responsibility to protect the peace process because it will lead the Palestinians to exercising their right to self-determination. Anything that hampers this is considered against the Palestinian people and any act that obstructs the Palestinian administration delays the Palestinians' exercise of their right to self-determination.

The foreign minister emphasized that the Egyptian policy will accept nothing less than the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, pointing out that it is an indispensable part of pan-Arab and regional security to establish a Palestinian state. Without this, we cannot guarantee stability or a comprehensive peace, Musa said.

Musa pointed out that this talk is not strange to many politicians in Israel and that a change has occurred in the Arab and Israeli arena with the pursuit of peace. He noted the establishment of peace between Israel and both Egypt and Jordan. Noting that the press reports contacts between the Palestinians and some Israeli settlers, Musa remarked that such a change makes it incumbent on Israel to change its conduct and stop the measures it is adopting—the closure, expulsion, and confiscation of land—because the continuation of this policy leads to frustration and resistance and culminates in violence. We want peace for both sides. It is in their interest to step up negotiations. The measures and policies must be balanced, he said.

The foreign minister said that many things are being said as part of the electoral process in Israel. He stated that it is unacceptable to sacrifice 'Arafat or the Palestinian Authority at the altar of the Israeli elections. We are being objective and we talk to Israel about this logic, he said.

'Amr Musa pointed to the fact that the Syrian-Israeli track, as well as the Lebanese-Israeli track, has been suspended and that there are question marks in this regard. The Lebanese people cannot accept the occupation of south Lebanon, he said.

The foreign minister stressed that the two sides should move toward peace. Some people think that peace in the Middle East means Israel's peace. This is unsound, unviable, and we in Egypt cannot accept it, Musa stressed. He remarked that it is wrong to think that a twisted peace can be established in favor of one party. Peace must be a balanced peace for both Arabs and Israelis and Israel should live normally as a state; we should coexist. Anything less than that is not acceptable, he stressed.

Musa warned against the policies that take the side of Israel. We cannot accept or live with that, he emphasized.

With regard to reports of a strategic alliance between Israel and the United States, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said the topic was raised during U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's meeting with President Husni Mubarak and other meetings during his visit. He denied there was such an alliance. He noted that the issue here is whether such an agreement is possible and, if so, what its framework will be, and who it will be against. Will it be against the enemy of today or tomorrow? Who determines the state of hostility? If the issue deals with Israel, which is in the heart of the region, will we be accused? Or are measures expected to be taken against this? Otherwise, peace and the spirit of peace will not be rooted in the hearts of those people who aspire to peace. The denial Perry announced is sufficient for now. But Egypt continues to monitor the situation very closely.

The foreign minister said we have always opposed a foreign role in imposing alliances on the region. A strategic alliance in the atmosphere of peace contradicts the spirit of peace. We do not accept this. Every action has a reaction. In other words, any ideas an international power may have that Egypt can give in and accept such arrangements is wrong. Egypt's history in dealing with the Middle East and its events is known. We only carry on the policies of our predecessors. We are the biggest country in the region and will continue to play a major role in line with what we believe and we warn against the creation of circumstances that restore policies of confrontation to the region.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said it is in Israel's interest to establish peace so that we might lead a normal life. The same applies to us. The Palestinian people should have the right to self-determination. This is the sound security system for the region: Land is retrieved, borders are defined, and the Israelis get their security within the framework of peace. Any confusion will only prolong the political instability in the region.

With regard to reports of a security agreement between Israel and Turkey, the foreign minister clarified that reports are contradictory. Turkey is a friendly and fraternal country. It is a big country in the Middle East and we care about having a good relationship with it. If it takes particular steps it could create disturbances in the region. We hope Turkey will avoid such steps. We are in touch with the Turks and we will contact Israel to learn what the security plans are and who they are against.

With regard to Israel's nuclear program, 'Amr Musa said that regional security cannot be established unless nuclear reactors are placed under supervision and the region becomes free of weapons of mass destruction. This is a necessary condition and our stance on it is categorical.

He said that if Israel or any other state insists on a nuclear dimension to its policy, we can only expect a nuclear race in the region. How easy it is to acquire such a nuclear dimension. Israel must realize that this issue opens a very dangerous door.

On Iran's nuclear situation, Musa asks: Why should one country have nuclear facilities and Iran not? He said Iran has joined the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and is legally bound not to lean toward military affairs. Allowing one country to own nuclear weapons means an inescapable nuclear race in the Middle East. Declaring Africa a region free of nuclear weapons requires the establishment of a parallel region in the Middle East.

On the Dimona reactor, the foreign minister said that reports on this are contradictory. Our experts have reported that there is no change in climatic conditions. I have also read that Jordan did discover some disturbances. There is coordination among various scientific sides inside Egypt. There are also inter-Arab contacts and Arab-international contacts. This issue will be discussed on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty To Free Africa of Nuclear Weapons, because it is a crucial issue relating to the Israeli nuclear program, which is not under supervision.

On Libya, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stressed that Egypt is working to prevent sanctions from intensifying, as some parties desire. He said: The U.S. defense secretary told me of the recent accusation concerning chemical weapons factories. He presented maps on this to President Mubarak. But the president did not see sufficient evidence to convince him and proposed that an Egyptian-European committee travel there to see if there is any evidence of such a factory. The case will be dealt with calmly and peacefully and without any military action against Libya.

He added: Libyan revolution leader Colonel al-Qadhdhafi stresses that he does not have weapons. If he has, why Israel? [sentence as received] If you do not accept this here, then why do you accept it there? We cannot accept Israel having a unique position.

On Sudan, Musa stressed that Egypt and Sudan represent an extension of each other and the two people's interests lie in integration. But, he added, everything has its conditions. He said: We call on the Sudanese regime to review its actions against Egypt. After referring to the attempt on President Husni Mubarak's life in Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's accusation of Sudan, Musa said: If Sudan continues with its policies of supporting terrorism, then the world will not accept what it is doing, because it creates trouble in the region. We do not want developments to harm the Sudanese people and Sudan's future.

On Iraq, the foreign minister stressed that we will resist any action to partition it and will take whatever measures are necessary. He added that Egypt is working to end the suffering of the Iraqi people and that this starts with the regime's compliance with the Security Council resolutions. He called on the Iraqi Government to adopt flexible positions and measures that do not infringe the country's sovereignty.

Concluding his statement, Musa stressed that if we do not defend our Arab identity, the Arabs will fall into an abyss.

Egypt: Musa on Peace, Turkey, U.S.-Israeli 'Alliance'

NC0904164896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that the Middle East peace process is going through a very serious phase, particularly the Palestinian track, which has been affected negatively by acts of violence.

The foreign minister read a statement before the foreign relations, Arab affairs, and national security committees of the People's Assembly at a meeting held today.

Musa said: We cannot hold the Palestinian administration and Chairman 'Arafat responsible for this violence. Israel, too, has to bear responsibility.

Musa said that according to international law, the policy of collective punishment, the blockade thrown up around the Palestinians, and Israel's expulsion of the Palestinians are unacceptable. He added that the continuation of this Israeli policy is bound to have negative repercussions on the peace process — stressing that the Palestinian and Israeli sides must work toward peace and hasten the resumption of negotiations.

Musa said Egypt can accept nothing less than a just and comprehensive peace that restores Arab lands and acknowledges the Palestinian people's right to establish their own state and determine their own future. This is at the heart of Egyptian national security, as well as regional security, Musa said.

Musa warned against any policies that might lead to drifting away from the march toward peace, saying that Egypt will neither accept nor live with such policies.

Touching on reports about an American-Israeli alliance, Musa said: President Mubarak raised this matter with the U.S. secretary of defense, who denied the existence of such an alliance. He pointed out that it is in the interest of both the Arabs and Israel to establish peace and give the Palestinian people their full rights.

Commenting on reports about a security agreement between Turkey and Israel, Musa remarked that there are conflicting reports on that matter. Turkey is a friendly state, and we are interested in having good relations with it, he said.

Egypt: Consultative Council Denounces Perry's Remarks on Libya

NC0904205096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2025 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Apr (MENA)—The Consultative Council's Arab and Foreign Affairs and National Security Committee has called for intensive Arab action on all Arab and international levels to force Israel to accept nuclear inspection of its nuclear arsenal and all its nuclear facilities. It said this is necessary to serve the interests of the peoples of the region and to avoid the danger of a radioactive leak.

In their meeting under committee secretary Muhammad Qurashi, the committee members stressed rejection of Israel's policy toward the residents of the occupied territories.

The members said U.S. claims that Libya has a chemical weapons factory are nothing but an attempt to find an excuse to attack Libya. The members denounced the fact that this was announced by the U.S. secretary of defense on Egypt's territory.

Egypt: Foreign Ministry—Egyptian Embassy Staff in Liberia 'Fine'

NC0904195896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1940 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Apr (MENA)—The Foreign Ministry is following up developments in the situation in Liberia in light of the acts of violence there. Foreign Ministry sources said that the situation is still deteriorated in Liberia as a result of the ongoing events. The sources added that Egyptian Ambassador Ahmad al-Misiri and the embassy staff are fine and are currently at a U.S. Embassy security building in Monrovia.

Egypt: Al-Azhar Shaykh Implies Suicide Bombers Not Martyrs

NC0904114096 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 31 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by Hanan Hasan in Alexandria]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Eminence Grand Imam Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, shaykh of al-Azhar, has stated that the Islamic shari'ah is built on tolerance, leniency, open-mindedness, and moderation. It is also founded on equality between rich and poor, and on placing the public interest before any personal interest. [passage omitted]

Addressing a seminar on "Islam and Human Health" organized by Alexandria University, Shaykh Tantawi called for the advancement of good science for the benefit and progress of nations. This is a scholar's duty, because good science implants virtues in individuals.

Shaykh Tantawi added: "We must promote altruism and spread Islam, security, and assurance. We must fight by any means legalized by God anyone who wants to subvert, destroy, or sow corruption on earth. We must give him advice and even use threats if need be, and if this does not work, then the law must take its course." He said: "We cannot support injustice, whether by the ruler or his subjects. This is because virtues and sins are not one and the same. He who sows corruption on earth and scares innocent people is not a Muslim. Love for the homeland is an act of faith. He who does not love his homeland does not love his religion."

Asked about his view on government-funded pilgrimage, Shaykh Tantawi said: "I cannot say it is not an acceptable pilgrimage. The Islamic shari'ah orders us to be virtuous. One of the signs of virtue is when an individuals worships God using his own funds. This worship will be more acceptable by God."

Asked about the suicide attacks occurring in Palestine, Shaykh Tantawi said: "There is a difference. If an individual is on a battlefield and sacrifices his life to kill his enemies, he is a martyr. But as regards he who kills innocent children and women, this is a matter between him and God. I cannot say both cases are equal." [passage omitted]

Asked about female circumcision, Shaykh Tantawi said that "female circumcision is a custom, not a religious duty. There is no authenticated saying [by Prophet Muhammad] on this matter. All the sayings on this subject are weak and unreliable. We leave this matter to doctors and specialists." [passage omitted]

Libya

Libya: 'Road Blocks, Checkpoints, Searches' Said Increasing Daily

BR0904123896 Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian 7 Apr 96 p 8

[Report by Massimo A. Alberizzi: "Attacks, Conspiracies, Threats: Al-Qadhdhafi Regime Trembles, But Denies It All for Now"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the last week in February, Surt — the Libyan city overlooking the gulf of the same name — hosted the Libyan People's Congress, a ritual designed to consecrate the regime and its leader, Muhammad al-Qadhdhafi. The dictator was due to deliver a speech, but for security reasons it was not known when.

However, one of his opponents did know his plans. A car was stuffed unbelievably full of explosives. The intention was to blow up the entire conference hall. The car made its way toward the site but, not far away, it was intercepted by al-Qadhdhafi's hand-picked guard. In the ensuing shoot-out the car blew up: 17 officers and three terrorists died.

Although the Libyan authorities did their utmost to keep the event a secret, the news was leaked recently when a number of eye witnesses from Surt reached Alexandria, in Egypt. That the action was indeed attempted is shown by the fact that the colonel's personal guard has largely been replaced: "Now faces are appearing that nobody has ever seen before," according to one Libyan visitor, who asked to remain anonymous.

"It is becoming more and more difficult every day to travel between Tripoli and the Egyptian border," our interviewee told us by telephone. "Road blocks, checkpoints, searches. From Surt to Benghazi you are stopped all the time. I think that after the recent unrest in Benghazi the regime is trying to avert possible infiltrations toward the capital. It is very difficult now to go south toward the Kufrah Oasis, too. The police make you make long detours."

News of the attack on al-Qadhdhafi comes at a time when U.S. pressure on the dictator is being stepped up. [passage omitted]

The Libyan regime is rigid and strongly controlled. There are spies everywhere. "Nevertheless," our interviewee explained, "there are organizations that carry out attacks very resolutely." Who are they?

"It is difficult to say," came the reply. "It seems, though it is not absolutely certain, that they are Islamic fundamentalists, and indeed the methods used by the terrorists support this hypothesis."

"A month ago, for instance, three men had their throats cut along Tripoli's southern bypass. It was rumored to be a reckoning between drug dealers (drug taking is rising fast throughout the country), but in fact it was a vendetta conducted against members of the regime, who were murdered using the methods of Algeria's GIA (Armed Islamic Group) fundamentalists."

Then there are the nonconfessional oppositionists linked to the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, the NFSL, led by Colonel Khalifah Haftar [name as published]. This officer was the commander of the large air base at Wadi Dum, constructed by the Libyans in Chad in the eighties, when al-Qadhdhafi's troops occupied the north of the country. In 1987 Wadi Dum fell into the hands of Chadian troops (who enjoyed logistical support from the French). Khalifah was captured, disowned the dictator, and became the military leader of the NFSL. "They too may have taken part in the Benghazi revolt. Actually it is not very clear what is going on. Perhaps America's threats are intended partly to bring the groups in opposition to the colonel out into the open."

Sudan

Sudan: Vice President Announces Peace Deal Reached With Rebels

EA0904161096 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The first vice president of the Republic, Major General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, has announced that the government has reached an agreement with the Southern Sudan Independence Movement, led by Riak Machar, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, led by Kerubino Kuanyin Bol, to make and promote peace in Sudan.

The agreement will be formally signed tomorrow [10 April] at 0430 [local, as heard] at a general political meeting in Khartoum.

This was contained in a statement made by Maj. Gen. al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih this morning at the National Assembly. The first vice president said the agreement was the fruit of patient efforts, long perseverance, and mutual confidence and courage by the participants.

Maj. Gen. al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih stressed that the National Salvation Revolution would continue its efforts to bring all sides to sincere consultations so as to safeguard the national interest, bring about peace, and strengthen its pillars and foundations. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Clashes Reported Between Government Militia, Rebels in East

EA1004102996 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 0400 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] National Islamic Front [NIF] Militia have begun laying mines in populated areas in eastern Sudan. Three of the mines blew up vehicles carrying innocent civilians, killing some and seriously injuring others.

After the incident, forces of the [rebel] Beja Congress began to clear mines in the area so as to protect the lives of the citizens.

The NIF government sent its armed militia with several armed vehicles to prevent the mine-clearing exercise and later clashed with forces of the Beja Congress. In the battle, a landcruiser vehicle armed with (Doshka) artillery belonging to the NIF was destroyed, six NIF militiamen killed, and their weapons captured.

The battle occurred near Mt. [word indistinct] in Togan area, this week. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Opposition Radio on NIF 'Crisis' in Forming Government

EA1004103496 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 0400 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed sources say that the National Islamic Front [NIF] leaders led by Brigadier 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir are facing a crisis in forming the next government. Brig. 'Umar al-Bashir had earlier promised army officers that he would form a government of national unity.

However, this attempt has been rebuffed by all political forces and differences have emerged between the Riak Machar, Lam Akol, Arok Thuon Arok, and Kerubino Kuanyin groups, regarding how to share the posts allocated to them.

Arok Thuon Arok is seeking the chairmanship of the transitional executive council from the southern region while Riak Machar wants the vice presidency and chairmanship of the executive council. Kerubino Kuanyin wants to be (?recognized) as head of the southern leadership.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: BBC's Arabic TV Service To Be Terminated After Dissident Report

LD0804192396 London PRESS ASSOCIATION in English 1804 GMT 8 Apr 96

[By Roger Williams, PA News]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The BBC's Arabic language television service is to be axed, it was announced tonight — three months after its future was thrown into doubt by coverage of the case of a Saudi dissident.

A specially recruited Arabic team of 250 editorial and other staff face losing their jobs after what the Corporation said it hoped would be "an orderly wind down" by agreement with its Saudi- owned partner company.

A BBC Worldwide TV spokesman said he could not comment on the reasons for the decision, due to the terms of a commercial contract with Orbit Communications, which is owned by a cousin of King Fahd.

The BBC announcement came exactly a week after BBC's Panorama programme about the Mohammed al-Masari affair showed secretly-made footage of a man being publicly executed with a sword in Saudi Arabia.

The British Government has been trying to deport Mr al-Masari, who fled to Britain from Saudi Arabia in 1994 after he and other members of a pro-democracy group were arrested and tortured.

Since then he has campaigned against the Saudi royal family, accusing it of corruption.

The Panorama programme was shown uncensored on the BBC Arabic Television channel, broadcast by satellite to subscribers in the Middle East and North Africa.

But three months ago reports on the channel about the al-Masari affair began to be blacked out.

BBC sources at the time said this could only have been done by Rome-based Orbit, responsible for satellite transmission, and said they regarded it as a breach of contract.

Arabic Tonight's announcement said: "BBC Worldwide and Orbit Satellite Television are seeking an agreed settlement of outstanding matters between them as an integral part of the termination of the contract under which BBC Worldwide Television provides the BBC Arabic Television channel to the Orbit subscription network in the Middle East and North Africa.

"Both parties wish to see the existing channel maintained until separation terms are agreed and to permit an orderly wind down of the service."

The BBC spokesman said it was not possible to say how long it might take before the channel was axed.

It was launched in June 1994 as a two-hour daily service, expanding to its current eight hours-a-day within three months.

The channel, offering international news, business and factual programmes, is presented entirely in the Arabic language, with Arab presenters and graphics.

It is produced at BBC TV Centre in west London by an Arabic team.

The corporation stressed the operation was strictly commercial, with no costs falling to licence-payers or the British Government.

The spokesman said the possibility of a new partner to fund the service was being investigated.

In the Panorama programme, the Saudi ambassador to London, Dr. Ghazi Algosaibi, warned that British arms sales to Saudi Arabia might be endangered — putting thousands of jobs at risk — if Mr. al-Masari was allowed to stay in Britain.

The Government, which said it was acting to protect British exports, ordered Mr. al-Masari to leave in January for the Caribbean island of Domenica, but the dissident appealed against deportation.

The row has echoes of the ITV documentary Death of a Princess in 1980, which provoked a diplomatic row between Saudi Arabia and Britain over its report of the execution of a Saudi princess accused of adultery.

Saudi Arabia: Ministry Denies Media Reports of Arms Sent to Eritrea

LD0904163996 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1540 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 9 Apr (SPA) — A responsible source at the Ministry of Defense and Aviation has denied a recently published report in the 'AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI' newspaper, quoting informed sources in the Arab Gulf, to the effect that a large consignment of naval equipment and arms have been shipped from Jeddah harbor, Saudi Arabia, for the Eritrean Defense Ministry.

In a statement to SPA, the source affirmed that Saudi Arabia is displeased to see the dispute continue between the two dear neighbors, Yemen and Eritrea, and will never contribute to the worsening of this dispute. Quite the contrary, Saudi Arabia is diligently following up the efforts exerted by friends seeking to conciliate the two countries, and it hopes that these efforts will result in the satisfaction of all sides.

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Orders Retirement of Air Force Commander

LD0904174696 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
1652 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeddah, 9 Apr (SPA) — The following royal order has been issued.

In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

No. A/215, dated 21 Dhu al-Qi'dah 1416 Ah, corresponding to 9 April 1996

With God's help, we, Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, king of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and supreme commander of the Armed Forces;

After taking cognizance of Article 28 and Paragraph A of Article 117 of the Officers' Service Regulations, issued by royal decree No. 43, dated 28th Sha'ban 1393 AH; and on the basis of a proposal by the chairman of the Council of Ministers based on a recommendation by the minister of defense and aviation and inspector general, we have ordered the following:

1. The service of Air Force Commander Staff Lieutenant General Ahmad Bin Ibrahim al-Buhayri to be terminated by pensioning him off.

2. His highness the minister of defense and aviation is to carry out this order.

Yemen

Yemen: Deputy Prime Minister Denies 'Contacts' With Israel

JN0904203296 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1830 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 9 Apr (INA)—'Abd-al-Karim al- Iryani, Yemeni deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has stated that the embargo imposed on the Arab people in Iraq and Libya stands in the way of restoring any form of Arab solidarity. In a statement published in the Yemeni weekly AL-MITHAQ today, al-Iryani said that Arab solidarity is impossible while Iraq and Libya are under siege, voicing regret because the Arab states are not qualified to lift this siege.

Al-Iryani renewed the call for settling the dispute with Eritrea by peaceful means, ensuring the return of the Yemeni island of al- Hanish al-Kabir, which is occupied by Eritrea, to Yemen. He voiced hope that the French mediation, to which Yemen responded positively, will succeed in solving the dispute. He accused the Eritrean side of evading the French mediation and looking for illegal mediations that are not based on international law and the rights of sovereignty.

The Yemeni deputy premier denied any contacts between his country and the Zionist entity, noting that his country is deeply suspicious of this entity's intentions and seriousness in the search for peace, as proven by recent events in the occupied territories, especially the closure imposed on the Palestinian people.

Al-Iryani admitted differences between the two parties forming the ruling coalition; namely, the General People's Congress and the Yemeni Reform Grouping, asserting that each party has its own opinion on certain matters but the degrees of difference are not so sharp as to require a breakup of the coalition.

Al-Iryani noted that the Yemeni economy is improving, especially after agreement with the World Bank and the IMF.

He said that the country received $75 million from the World Bank last week as a first installment and that the bank will shortly extend another $52 million to bolster the balance of payments and strengthen the Yemeni currency.

Iraq: UN Optimism Over Possible Oil Deal Cited

JN0904183696 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1650 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The United Nations, 9 Apr (INA)—The United Nations General Secretariat renewed its optimism over the possible attainment of an agreement with Iraq on the issue of oil in exchange for food, medicine, and basic needs of the Iraqi people.

Official UN Spokeswoman Sylvana Foa said at noon today that UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali is optimistic over the possible attainment of an agreement with Iraq. She added that Butrus-Ghali is personally interested in following the developments of the ongoing dialogue.

Foa went on to say that since his return from his Asian tour on Saturday, the UN secretary general has held three meetings with Hans Corell, UN under secretary general for legal affairs, who is heading the UN delegation to the talks.

Foa pointed out that the UN secretary general met for several hours with Corell on Sunday. Since then, he has met with him twice. The last two meetings took place yesterday, Monday, before and after the first session of the third round of talks. The meetings focused on the progress achieved in the dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations, Foa concluded.

Iraq: Official 'Eager' for Success of UN Oil Talks

JN0904202096 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1838 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 9 Apr (INA)—'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, secretary general of the National Progressive and Patriotic Front [NPPF], asserted that Iraq is eager for the success of the current round of talks with the United Nations on the exchange of oil for food, medicine, and basic needs of the Iraqi people.

During a meeting today with a delegation of the Madrid international conference against the blockade headed by Mrs. Angles Maestro [name as transliterated], member of the Spanish Parliament representing the United Left, 'Abd-al-Ghafur added that the dialogue with the United Nations should not obliterate Iraq's right to have Paragraph 22 of UN Security Council Resolution 687 implemented. He hoped that the U.S. Administration would not interfere to obstruct this dialogue with a view to achieving anti-Iraq goals.

'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur touched on the democratic practices spearheaded by His Excellency President Saddam Husayn and embodied by the Great March Day [the day on which a popular referendum was held on the presidency of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn], which underlined the country's national unity. He maintained that His Excellency President Saddam Husayn is the guarantee for this unity, as well as the Iraqis' hope for a free and decent life and prosperity. He also emphasized women's role in elections in Iraq in terms of both nomination and voting.

The NPPF secretary general noted the NPPF's experience, the new horizons opened in the country, the multiparty system, press freedoms, as well as elections for professional and mass organizations.

For her part, Mrs. Angles Maestro, member of the Spanish Parliament, expressed the Spanish people's solidarity with the Iraqi people. She also condemned the unfair embargo clamped on Iraq.

Mrs. Maestro said that the anti-Iraq aggression is caused by the U.S. attempt to dominate the world and obstruct Iraq's quest for progress under His Excellency President Saddam Husayn. She reviewed the role of the Madrid international conference in aiding the Iraqi cause and exposing the anti-Iraqi policy as well as the unfair embargo clamped on Iraq, which is adversely affecting the Iraqis' lives.

The meeting was attended by Dr. 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Hashimi, head of the External Relations Bureau of the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party; Ibrahim Tahir Sallam, secretary general of the Kurdistan Revolutionary Party; Muhsin al-Barzanji, deputy secretary of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and member of the NPPF General Secretariat.

Iraq: Opposition Official 'Welcomes' al-Khazraji Defection

JN1004083496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English
10 Apr 96 p 2

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The head of the Iraqi National Accord movement, an exile group seeking to topple the regime of Saddam Husayn, has welcomed the decision by a former chief-of-staff of the Iraqi army to join the group after defecting from his country last month.

It was the first official comment by the movement on the defection of General Nizar al-Khazraji, who is believed to have been joined by another prominent Iraqi defector, Gen. Wafiq al-Samarra'i, a former chief of Iraqi military intelligence who arrived here last week after spending more than one year in Syria following his flight from his country.

Gen. al-Samarra'i has not made any public statements after arriving here, and, like Gen. al-Khazraji, was granted permission to stay in the Kingdom. But informed sources said he was likely to announce his decision to join the Iraqi National Accord movement soon.

In a press statement, Iyad 'Alawi, secretary-general of the Iraqi National Accord, which opened an office in Amman last month, described the decision by General al-Khazraji, 60, as a "significant contribution to the national effort to bring down Saddam's dictatorship."

Gen. al-Khazraji is a "distinguished Iraqi patriotic officer who cooperates and coordinates with the Iraqi National Accord, together with many other prominent Iraqi officers," said the statement.

The statement said Mr. 'Alawi and Gen. al-Khazraji "avail themselves of the opportunity to call on their brethren in the military establishment to join forces with Iraqi opposition to free the Iraqi people from tyranny and long suffering."

The statement, for the first time, also released background details of Gen. al-Khazraji.

It said Nizar al-Khazraji was born in al-Mawsil 1946 into the al-Khazraji tribe, which is concentrated in Diyala and around Baghdad and that the al-Khazraji and al-Ansari were one tribe.

Nizar al-Khazraji graduated from the Baghdad Military College as a lieutenant in 1958 and served as an officer in the special forces and then as a teacher in its school before becoming an aide de camp to the commander of the Second Division of the Iraqi army in 1964.

After graduating from the Military Staff College in 1968, he was posted as an assistant military attache in Moscow and then as commander of the Second Special Forces Battalion before assigned as military attache in India in 1974.

In 1977, he served as instructor/lecturer at the Military Staff College and then commanded the Fifth Infantry Brigade before being appointed commander of the Seventh Mountain Division in 1978.

In 1983, he was named general secretary of the Ministry of Defence and then director of military operations. In 1984, he was named commander of the First Corps and, two years later, assistant to the chief of staff for operations.

After serving another short-term as commander of the First Corps, he was named chief-of-staff of the Iraqi army in 1987.

"Through this position he directed the major military operations which started with liberating Faw City" from Iranian occupation in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and ended with Iran accepting a UN-brokered ceasefire in August 1988, the statement said.

"He was dismissed from his position in September 1990," one month after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and appointed an advisor at the presidency, it added.

It did not refer to a statement by the Iraqi National Congress (INC), an umbrella group for Iraqi exiles, that Gen. al-Khazraji was wounded and captured by Shiite rebels who revolted against the Baghdad government in the aftermath of the Iraqi defeat in the war over Kuwait in early 1991 and was released.

The bio-data of the general noted that "his family has a military background; his father was a brigadier and his uncle, Major General Faysal al-Ansari, was (a) former chief-of-staff."

Informed sources said meanwhile that the family of Gen. al-Khazraji, who has two sons and two daughters, had joined the defector in Amman.

The Iraqi National Accord, which maintains an office in northern Iraq out of the control of the Baghdad government, describes itself as a group of former military officers living outside Iraq and serving personnel within the country as well as middle-level bureaucrats.

The Iraqi National Accord is part of a broad opposition alliance under the umbrella of the Iraqi National Congress, but its leadership does not fully agree with the decisions of INC, according to the Iraqi sources.

Iraq: 'Text' of Opposition Statement Issued in Damascus

JN0904140996 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 6 Apr 96 pp 1, 11

["Text" of statement issued by the Iraqi opposition leaders at the conclusion of their meetings in Damascus on 4 April]

[FBIS Translated Text] Out of their national and human responsibility and their awareness of the dangers threatening Iraq under the dictatorial regime; and in view of the Iraqi people's ordeal and daily suffering due to the economic embargo, the despotic rule, and the current circumstances witnessed by Iraq and the entire region; the representatives of the three mains trends—the Islamic, nationalist, and Kurdish—held a high-level consultative meeting in Damascus from 3-4 April 1996.

The meeting was permeated by an atmosphere of positive interaction and understanding of the country's ordeal, and by agreement on the general topics of the agenda. The meeting began with an analysis of the Iraqi political situation. The analysis dealt with issues related to the Iraqi regime, people, opposition, the regional and international situation, and the consequences of the political regional and international developments and their impact on the Iraqi question. The participants made an overall assessment of all the above-mentioned issues and their consequences.

The conferees acknowledged the dire need to establish an Iraqi national action plan [al-mashru' al-watani al-'iraqi] in which the various political forces would take part. In bringing about the desired change and toppling the regime, this plan would mainly depend on the personal efforts of the Iraqi people who seek a unified Iraq in which brotherhood and amity would prevail and where the people can enjoy security, peace, supremacy of the law, equality, political and human rights, and public freedoms. The plan will adhere to the political constants and the Iraqi people's unity and interests.

The conferees also asserted the need to free the will of the people and ensure their true participation in the formation of constitutional institutions on the basis of fair and free elections. The conferees asserted that in order to achieve these national goals, the national plan should incorporate all the Iraqi factions, political trends, and social strata. They also discussed the methods and mechanisms of changing the Iraqi regime and defined the requirements of this change so that both the people and the army would play an effective role in this process and shoulder their national responsibilities, taking into consideration the political circumstances on the regional and international levels.

The conferees also discussed the large capabilities of the unified Iraqi opposition and the need to employ such capabilities in this crucial process. They looked into all the eventualities and dangers Iraq may have to face and discussed the political language with which to address the Iraqi Army, tribes, security bodies, the party, the Republican Guard, the various social groups, popular bodies, and all other sectors.

The Iraqi opposition leaders also discussed all aspects of the future Iraqi regime. They agreed to form a follow-up committee from the representatives of the various political forces participating in the consultative meeting. The committee will be charged with implementing the recommendations and resolutions issued by the conferees, including the organization of the structure of the national plan and its formations on the political level and in the field. It will also make preparations for the expanded meeting which will incorporate all political trends and forces, and active independent opposition figures and organizations.

The opposition leaders also debated at length the issues singled out for discussion at the meeting. They called on Arab League states to help ease the suffering of the Iraqi people and to support their just struggle. They also demanded that the embargo be lifted on the people and tightened on the oppressive authority.

Finally, the conferees paid tribute to the political leadership in the Syrian Arab Republic for providing the opportunity to hold this meeting in Damascus. They said that Syria supported and continues to support the Iraqi people in their ordeal and their continuous efforts to overcome the tragic situation and get rid of dictatorship.

They highly valued the steadfast Syrian position in confronting international Zionism and the political pressures that seek to contain the region and control the destiny of its peoples. And say: Work righteousness; soon will God observe your work and his apostle and the believers. [Koranic verse]

Iraq: II Army Corps Commander Arrested After Helicopters Downed

JN0904144196 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Saddamist military intelligence apprehended Major General Sabah al-Tikriti, commander of the II Army Corps, in the wake of the destruction of eight helicopter gunships in the Mansuriyat al-Jabal area.

Iraqi opposition sources said that Maj. Gen. Sabah al-Tikriti was apprehended when several helicopter gunships were shot down in a maneuver in which elements of Monafeqin-e [meaning hypocrites, used to replace "Mojahedin-e"] Khalq and Iraqi Army troops took part.

The same sources added the commander of the II Army Corps will most probably face death due to his inability to accomplish the mission assigned him.

Some press reports said that several helicopter gunships were destroyed by Iraqi mujahdin early this year when they attacked the premises of the II Army Corps, which are located in the Mansuriyat al-Jabal camp in the Diyala Governorate, in retaliation against the massacres committed by elements of Monafeqin-e Khalq during the Sha'ban [1991] uprising in eastern and northern Iraqi cities.

Iraq: Kurdistan Committee Announces Plan To Restore 'Peace'

JN0904205996 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On the night of 8 April, the Kurdistan National Cooperation Committee [KNCC], which comprises the seven parties in Kurdistan, issued a statement to the steadfast masses of our people, announcing that the road is now open again for the restoration of peace. The statement carried practical propositions in this regard. The following is the text of the statement:

Statement from the KNCC to our steadfast people:

After a series of meetings with the brothers in the two political bureaus of the ruling parties and after proposing practical steps on the road to peace and normalization in Kurdistan; taking encouragement from the new climate made available by the brotherly letters exchanged between the two sides, the speeches and letters issued by the leaders of the two parties; and after the meeting of the two parties delegations in Damascus, the KNCC brings to our people the good news that the will of peace has succeeded in imposing itself through the following steps, thanks to the peaceful approach of the two parties and their practical proposals:

1. Stopping all media campaigns by the two sides as of 1800 on Tuesday, 9 April 1996. A special committee emanating from the KNCC will monitor the implementation of this step.

2. Stopping all tracking operations, violations, and unnatural measures of a political nature on the same date; that is, 1800 on 9 April. A special committee emanating from the KNCC will also monitor the implementation of this step.

3. Submitting lists of all the detainees, prisoners, and missing persons from both sides at 1800 on Thursday, 11 April 1996, to a special committee emanating from the KNCC in order to release them, exchange them, or reveal their fate.

4. Both sides agreed on the freedom to publish newspapers and the literature of both sides in all parts of Kurdistan.

5. With the support of the two sides, the KNCC will work for paving the way for the freedom of movement in all parts of Kurdistan.

While expecting the U.S. delegation's arrival in Kurdistan in the second half of his month, the KNCC hopes that these preliminary steps on the road to peace will be implemented, making them the beginning of a comprehensive peace in Kurdistan, and that our masses will prepare themselves for restoring peace.

[Signed] Irbil, 8 April, 1996.

In light of these points and in order to emphasize our party's intentions and peaceful principles and the restoration of legitimacy, and in order to prepare for the success of the U.S. mediation plan, the Central Bureau for Culture and Information issued a circular to all our media bodies to continue their moderate and peaceful policy and to work for making the media a factor of peace preparation.

Iraq: 'Udayy Moves Business Interests From Jordan to Turkey

JN0904142496 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 9 Apr 6

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources in Amman said that the reckless 'Udayy Saddam Husayn moved his business interests from Jordan to Turkey in light of the continued strain in ties between the Saddamist regime and its former ally, King Husayn.

The sources added that the Jordanian authorities suspect that these interests played a role in supplying the regime with banned military hardware and equipment. The Amman authorities distributed the description of Sattam al-Dulaymi, head of a Jordan-based agricultural corporation belonging to the tyrant's regime, charging that he used that corporation as a front to smuggle equipment and spare parts into Iraq.

In a separate development, the Iraqi opposition questioned the intentions of criminal Barzan al-Tikriti, who is currently visiting Jordan. The opposition added that his visit to Jordan is not aimed at liquidating his business interests, but rather at holding contacts with the elements of the regime's intelligence network in Jordan after the latter expelled Husayn Faraj, head of the intelligence network who worked at the regime's Amman embassy under the title of a press attache.

Iraq: Daily Urges Turkey To 'Reconsider' With Israel Agreement

JN0904132296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0710 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 9 Apr (INA) — An Iraqi newspaper urged the Turkish Government to reconsider its agreement with the Zionist entity so as to rectify the situation and promote Arab-Turkish relations without taking any measure that contradicts mutual interests.

In an article published here today under the headline "The Turkish-Zionist Agreement and Its Negative Impact," AL-'IRAQ newspaper says: The agreement came as a surprise. It totally contradicts the interests and aspirations of the Muslim, friendly Turkish people and greatly harms their national interests. The agreement also conflicts with the traditional course of Arab-Turkish relations, which always embodied a mutual desire to promote these relations to serve both sides.

AL-'IRAQ stresses that the agreement will definitely lead to further Zionist intransigence and tyranny. It will also encourage the Zionist entity to maintain its occupation of the land of Palestine and pursue its oppression of the Palestinian people. In addition, the agreement will increase Zionist ambitions in the Arab nation and do more harm to Muslims.

AL-'IRAQ expresses amazement at the Turkish-Zionist agreement, saying: The agreement came as a generous reward to the Zionist enemy for tightening its siege against the Palestinian people, escalating suppression and oppression against Palestinians, and pursuing savage practices that involve killing Palestinians. Meanwhile, Zionist officials continue to assert that they will not let go of their occupation of holy Jerusalem and other Palestinian territories.

The paper asserts that the Turkish-Zionist agreement created a feeling of bitterness, regret, and pain on the part of the sons of the Arab and Islamic nations. This is because it completely contradicts the spirit and essence of Islam and disavows the historical relations between Turkey and Arab and Islamic countries.

AL-'IRAQ further states that the friendly Muslim Turkish people believe that the agreement harms and distorts the peaceful relations with the Arab homeland and Islamic world, which, along with Turkey, face a common enemy represented in the hostile, ambitious, and rancorous forces targeting the rights of Arabs and Muslims.

AL-'IRAQ recalls the good Arab-Turkish relations, saying: These relations were always characterized with friendliness and mutual concern for boosting them, given the historical and geographical bonds linking the Arab nation with Turkey and its people. These relations are based on great Islam and a rightful and positive approach to preserve and develop them in the interest of the two sides.

The paper recalls the Turkish people's support for and sympathy with the Arab causes. It cites as an example the Turkish people's sympathy with the Palestine question and the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian Arab people to restore their inalienable rights to their homeland.

The paper adds: The Turkish people were forthright and clear over the past decades in terms of fully siding with the Arabs in their capacity as brothers and friends who should be supported and backed against the enemies, particularly the common and historical enemy of the Arabs, Turks, and all Muslims.

AL-'IRAQ goes on to say: This friendly approach continued to dominate the Arab-Turkish relations. Successive Turkish governments were keen to voice support for the Palestine question in international fora. Although Turkey had diplomatic relations with the Zionist entity, they remained at the minimal level. They did not expand to a large extent that harms Arab-Turkish relations or the feelings of Arabs, Muslims, and the Turkish people, who realize the extent of injustice that was done to the Palestinian people as a result of the spiteful Zionist occupation.

Israel: Peres Holds News Conference on Situation in North

TA0904142196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1305 GMT 9 Apr 96

[Report on Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' news conference by army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe in northern Israel on 9 April]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, had originally planned to visit Qiryat Shemona, but his media coordinator Avi Bnayahu said he was informed by both security and civilian officials of the difficult situation and feelings of anger prevailing in the north today. To avoid creating a conflict between the residents and the army on the eve of the holiday, the prime minister decided to stay away from Qiryat Shemona.

The prime minister was briefed by commanders and conducted a situation analysis, after which he held a news conference at an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] base in the north.

Asked whether Hizballah secretary Hasan Nasrallah was steering the actions of the IDF and of the State of Israel, Peres replied:

[Begin Peres recording] We do not plan to allow Hizballah to manage our affairs. We will do whatever is necessary, but rationally and not out of militant ardor. I do not regret having enabled the Upper Galilee to celebrate Passover peacefully. [end recording]

I do not have to act in accordance with what others think the government should do, Shim'on Peres said.

[Begin Peres recording] The government does not have a policy of self-restraint. The government has a policy of sound sense. I think I would be at default if I were to allow politics to interfere with sound sense. Since human lives are at stake, I must not allow irrelevant factors to sway me. I am doing it to the best of my ability even when provoked, even when the situation is disagreeable. I try to decide each step on merit, after consulting with the chief of staff and other commanders. Not every consideration can be publicized. Unfortunately, I may not explain my considerations as freely as other people, and I do not complain, but I can assure you that our reaction is not the result of self-restraint, fear, or the elections, but of entirely cold deliberation.

I believe that the last time everyone understood why we did not retaliate. I think they realize it was the right and just thing to do, and I do not regret having enabled the Galilee to celebrate almost the entire holiday peacefully, having enabled tourists to visit, although we could have easily ordered them all into bomb shelters. At that time I was unable to explain the reasons, but now it is clear. The same is true about today: I cannot reveal everything prematurely.

This guerrilla-like war has lasted decades. A war — the war of Lebanon — was declared, and it cost us dearly. I am not criticizing it at this time, but it did not solve the problem. We have a guerrilla war on our hands, and guerrilla wars have rules, lengths, and a logic of their own, different from ordinary wars.

Residents of the Upper Galilee, residents of Qiryat Shemona: I can understand your grief and protest, and I am taking it as it should be taken — with full understanding. We will do our duty in an orderly and organized fashion. [end recording]

The prime minister reiterated: I am not acting with self-restraint; I am acting with sound sense. However, he supplied no unequivocal answers regarding any future action. He wished the injured a speedy recovery and said that in a meeting with heads of the local councils in the area, 30 million shekels were allocated for improvements. The prime minister and the finance minister, who accompanied the prime minister on his tour of the north, instantly approved the council heads' proposal for local development to the tune of 300 million shekels. Another more extensive plan was submitted and will require approval.

Israel: IDF Statement Says 36 Injured by Katyushas 9 Apr

TA0904181296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 9 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman has just issued a concluding statement on today's events in northern Israel. Two rounds of Katyushas were fired at Israel at 0715 [0415 GMT] this morning. Fourteen spots where Katyushas fell were observed inside Israeli territory. Thirty-six people were injured by the rockets: One teenage girl sustained serious injuries, and the others were slightly injured. Four wounded persons were hospitalized in a hospital, while 31 were treated by medical personnel and sent home.

The IDF fired back at the locations from which Katyushas had been fired. In addition, our planes raided terrorist targets in the area of Khirbat Silm. All our planes returned safely to base.

Israel: Pollard Release Said 'Promised' by Clinton During Visit

TA0904133696 (Internet) 'Arutz 7 News Service in English 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to an article appearing in this week's edition of the religious magazine, "HASHAVU'A," Jonathan Pollard, serving a life sentence in the U.S. for spying for Israel, will be released in the next few weeks. The report claims that during his recent visit to Israel, U.S. President Bill Clinton promised to grant Pollard clemency. A high-ranking source in the Prime Minister's office revealed that Pollard's release would take place a week before the Israeli elections. However, members of the Israeli Lobby for Pollard raised doubts as to the veracity of the reports. Although such a move would assist Shim'on Peres in his election campaign, it would damage President Clinton's chances of being reelected. It is unlikely therefore, they claim, that President Clinton will release Jonathan Pollard within the coming months.

Israel: Shahal on Hizballah; Era of 'Self-Restraint' Seen as Over

TA0904180296 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 9 Apr 96

[Studio talk between anchor Mickey Haimovich and correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Haimovich] 'Imanu'el, has the era of political self-restraint ended?

[Rosen] I believe it has. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres dealt with the Lebanese issue all day today, and he holds all the options to act as he sees fit. The political echelons believe that Hizballah has crossed every red line and obliterated all the understandings achieved after Operation Accountability. The attempts of recent weeks to resolve the problem and rectify the situation through political and diplomatic action failed for various reasons, which cannot be discussed here. That is why I believe the answer to your question is affirmative. I suggest we listen to what Minister Moshe Shahal told us a short while ago:

[Begin Shahal recording] The Hizballah interpretation of the understandings achieved in July 1993 is broad far beyond anything intended in the wake of Operation Accountability. We will not tolerate a situation where Qiryat Shemona is the target of Katyushas, while the other side enjoys calm. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Israel: Netanyahu Interviewed on Likud Peace Policy

MM0904151096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 6 Apr 96 p 7

[Interview with Israeli Likud Party Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu by Salamah Ni'mat in Jerusalem; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ni'mat] What would be your party's program if you won the coming elections?

[Netanyahu] Our program is peace with our Arab neighbors. The impression that the Likud is opposed to peace is silly at best. We were the first to establish peace with Egypt under a Likud government of which I was a member. We went to the Madrid conference in the first direct negotiations between Israel and all its Arab neighbors. I am today committed to that line and we will negotiate with the Palestinians for peace land negotiate with Syria for peace, and we will negotiate with all the Arab states for a permanent peace that we can preserve and prevent from collapsing before our eyes, like what is happening now as a result of the present government's policy.

[Ni'mat] How does your peace policy differ from that of the Labor government?

[Netanyahu] The objectives will not be different. The aim is identical.... We want stability and cooperation with our Arab neighbors. Our policies may be different in that we are more realistic and we do not believe in the optimistic concept of a new Middle East. We believe in a Middle East more acceptable to Israel, but it would still face real problems such as fundamentalism, terrorism, and political instability. That is apart from the possible positive opportunities. We will seek to exploit the available opportunities and minimize the concurrent risks. That would necessarily depend on a security formula as the basis for peace. With security guaranteed, we can guarantee the durability of the peace treaties.

[Ni'mat] Do you expect an escalation of violence before the elections?

[Netanyahu] I believe we will witness an escalation of violence by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] either before or after the elections because Hamas is committed to the destruction of Israel and is not affected by the successes which might be achieved in the peace process. Such escalation is a threat not only to Israel but also to the neighboring regimes. I believe that the current government's policy does not solve but rather complicates the problem because Hamas uses the Palestinian Authority [PA] as an umbrella to expand its operations and build bases for future attacks against Israel and, afterwards, against the PA itself.

[Ni'mat] But the indications are that the Hamas suicide operations serve your election campaign.

[Netanyahu] They serve nobody. The operations are against Israelis. Hamas does not differentiate between Israeli rulers.... It wants to liquidate Israel.

[Ni'mat] But they help you indirectly because you adopt a security first policy.

[Netanyahu] These operations expose the current security arrangements which put Israel's security in the hands of (Yasir) 'Arafat and the PA, which is unable or unwilling to shoulder its responsibilities. We want to live in peace with the Palestinians and we want them to run their own affairs. We do not wish to control them or their lives but the present government has gone further than that by entrusting our security affairs to them. That is where we disagree with the government. We approach the issue in a different way: Self-rule for the Palestinians and security for the Israelis. That is our policy, and I believe it is the best policy for peace.

[Ni'mat] But what would you do with the Oslo agreements if you came to power? Some leaders in your party are saying that they would abrogate these agreements and whatever might follow.

[Netanyahu] The Oslo agreements have created undeniable facts on the ground. I believe that we would recognize these facts and proceed from there. You should remember that the issues we are facing now are not confined to Oslo-1 and Oslo-2. There is an Oslo-3, an Oslo-4, and perhaps an Oslo-5 to be negotiated. We would negotiate with the PA, expecting it to honor its peace commitments in relation to the open recognition of Israel, cancellation of the Palestinian National Charter, and adoption of genuine policies against terrorism and its infrastructure in the territories under Palestinian control, but on the final settlement, which is what we are talking about, we should negotiate in a way that would enable the Palestinians to run their own living affairs with the least possible interference by us, in all fields with the exception of foreign policy and security which must remain in our hands. That, in my view, is the only realistic solution which can be implemented. I personally prefer to see a role for Jordan in the final settlement on various levels, but it would be up to the Palestinians and Jordanians to agree on such arrangements.

[Ni'mat] Do you suggest a limited self-rule similar to that proposed by former Prime Minister Menachem Begin during the Camp David negotiations?

[Netanyahu] We propose a wide self-rule covering all aspects of life. We are not concerned with returning to Nabulus, Bethlehem, or Qalqilyah.... But I want a guarantee that these areas would not become springboards for launching terrorist operations against Israel. I believe that there is a way of fulfilling the Palestinians' need to rule themselves and our need for security. We must define the self-rule areas in which the Palestinians could live and define the security areas, as proposed in Camp David and Madrid, areas which must remain under Israeli control. At the same time we should make it understood that Israel would act to protect its citizens at any time and in any manner it deems fit. We would not have to do that often once the PA realizes that the Israelis would not accept terrorist escalation, which would also harm the Palestinians themselves.

[Ni'mat] Would you object to the self-rule developing into an independent state?

[Netanyahu] I believe we should use different terminology. It should not be a question of whether it should be a state with sovereignty or military and political hegemony. That is now a thing of the past. After the collapse of the Soviet Union many developments occurred leading to intermingled and intermixed situations, from central Europe to the farthest point in Asia, making it necessary for us to apply different terminology to define the political institutions and regimes which emerged. In many parts of the world new republics emerged, some based on ethnic nationalism of minorities seeking greater freedom. If we regard the establishment of a state as the only solution, the world would today have 380 states instead of 180, each with its own army, weapons, ambitions, and policy, and the world community's stability would have been far more severely shaken.

My view is that self-rule would be less than a state but it would allow the local inhabitants to run their own affairs, choose their own leadership, and govern themselves. The time has come for such an idea. If we were to permit the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the territories...that could destabilize the regimes around it, and I do not mean just Israel.

[Ni'mat] There are some Arab fears about you assuming power. Do you see no justification for that?

[Netanyahu] Not at all. That is one of the ironies. The great breakthroughs toward peace have usually come from our party. When I visited Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Germany he told me that when he ran for election the opposition warned that he would lead the country into a tragic confrontation between West Germany and East Germany..... Of course what happened was the opposite. When Ronald Reagan ran for election they said that he would lead the United States to a destructive confrontation with the Soviet Union and to an East-West confrontation. The opposite happened. The same thing was said about Menachem Begin, the first Likud leader. It was claimed that if he was elected he would cause a war between Israel and the Arabs. The opposite occurred, when peace was established with Egypt.

The same thing will happen when we assume power. We will disappoint the doubters and will establish a wider and more stable peace because we are realistic and know how to negotiate from a position of mutual respect with our neighbors, with frankness and without attempting to beautify the reality facing us. Peace requires give and take.... A Likud government can make concessions that would be approved by the majority of the Israeli people, because it would realize the importance of that for making peace. The Labor government cannot muster such Israeli public support.

[Ni'mat] But some leading figures in your party, such as Ari'el Sharon, are still claiming that Jordan is Palestine...which constitutes an implied threat to it.

[Netanyahu] The insinuation that we have designs against Jordan is a thing of the past. Today everyone understands that, despite our historical roots in the region commonly called "British Mandate Palestine," nobody in Likud is seriously thinking about annexing Jordan to Israel. On the contrary, my view, which is the overwhelming view in the party, is that we should do everything we can to contribute to the stability of Jordan, which has set a splendid example of what real peace means. Unlike 'Arafat, King Husayn has done much to influence his people's public opinion in favor of peace despite the considerable opposition, and he created suitable conditions for reconciliation with Israel. I did the same thing in the party after I met secretly with Crown Prince Hasan three months before the peace treaty was signed between us. That treaty gained more support in the Israeli Knesset than the Camp David treaty. Today we are committed to that peace and to strengthening that peace and strengthening our relations with Jordan. We will remain committed to that policy in the future.

[Ni'mat] What is your position on the provision in the treaty which speaks of a role for Jordan in the final status of the holy places in Jerusalem?

[Netanyahu] I believe that there is a difference between the religious and spiritual aspect of the settlement and the matter of sovereignty. We clearly support the first. Actually there has been a retreat by the Israeli Government on that because what had been promised to Jordan has been transferred to the PA. I prefer the previous arrangement.

[Ni'mat] Which is?

[Netanyahu] That Jordan manages the Islamic holy places and continues to shoulder its responsibilities toward them. We have always believed that, in the context of a final settlement, followers of the three great religions should be allowed access to their holy places without any hindrance and that every religion should run its own holy places.... We certainly do not wish to run the Islamic holy places.... That is up to the Muslims.

[Ni'mat] Would you encourage a dialogue between the PA and Hamas?

[Netanyahu] There is dialogue but, regrettably, it is going in the wrong direction. If the dialogue was geared toward persuading Hamas to end its terrorist campaign and abandon its aim of destroying Israel, we would, of course, have welcomed it...but what has really happened is exactly the opposite. Last December's agreement between Hamas and the PA allowed Hamas to continue its terrorist operations provided they are not launched from territory under the PA's control, which is the opposite of what should have happened. 'Arafat would have been able to win over the Israeli public opinion had he honored his commitments, but he did not.

[Ni'mat] Do you not believe that the current U.S. Administration fully supports the Labor government?

[Netanyahu] I met with the President (Clinton) in this hotel (Larom) [as transliterated] some weeks ago. He assured me that the U.S. policy is a policy toward Israel and its people regardless of any change of government. He emphasized that the U.S. Government will continue to cooperate on the peace process with any government chosen by the Israeli people. I believe that is a wise policy. For my part, I told him that I am ready to cooperate with any U.S. Administration elected by the American people.

[Ni'mat] How would your handling of the security situation differ from that of the present government?

[Netanyahu] We would take security measures and make arrangements that would allow the Israeli forces to intervene to abort any terrorist operation before it is launched from any place west of the River Jordan. You should remember that three out of five Arab-Israeli wars started because of terrorist escalation. These were the 1956, 1967, and 1982 wars. Terrorism and security. Syria wants its name crossed off the list of states supporting terrorism and we want it to stop supporting terrorism through Hizballah's operations against northern Israel and to stop the operations carried out by Damascus-based terrorist organizations. If Syria dissolves these organizations I see no reason why Israel should not explain that it would not object to the rehabilitation of Syria at the international level. There are other areas of cooperation to serve mutual interests, such as solving the water problem.... Such matters would ease the tension between our two countries and enhance trust in a way that would lead to peace.

[Ni'mat] What about the Golan Heights?

[Netanyahu] The Golan was used by Syria to attack us for 19 years. Even if we did not have historical roots there — and we do — international law does not recognize Syria's claim to it.... You cannot launch a war from an area, leading to your losing it, and then claim that it was usurped from you. I believe that Syria should rule out the idea of withdrawal from the Golan Heights. I also believe that Syria's other interests are more important. It is true that Syria wants the Golan but that is not a priority. I believe that its priorities are as follows: First, internal stability with the continuation of the regime; second, Syria's position and regional role; third, its role in Lebanon; fourth, its relations with the United States; and fifth, the Golan Heights.

The current Israeli negotiators' mistake is the direct concentration on the fifth priority at the expense of other priorities more important to Syria. That way they are pushing al-Asad in a certain direction and putting him in a position he does not want to be in. The Likud government, therefore, may differ with Syria over the Golan, but it would be able to achieve progress on the three or four other issues which might be more important to Damascus.

[Ni'mat] What is your opinion of President Hafiz al-Asad?

[Netanyahu] There is no doubt that he is a capable leader.... He has remained on top of power for a long time, but we are concerned because of Syria's tendency to couple the talk about peace with acts of aggression against its neighbors. Such acts are usually carried out through a third party. It carries them out in Lebanon through Hizballah and in Turkey through the Kurdish workers Party. We have also learned that it is carrying out similar actions against another Arab state. That does not help peace, because anyone who talks about peace must work for it, which Syria has not done so far.... I would like to see more harmony between Syrian words and Syrian deeds.

[Ni'mat] You recently visited Jordan and met with Crown Prince Hasan and Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti. It has been said here in Israel that the aim of the visit did not go beyond election calculations. What do you say?

[Netanyahu] It was my fifth meeting with Crown Prince Hasan. Every meeting strengthens my conviction that in Jordan we have a true partner in the peace process. We have contacts with other Arab states which we cannot reveal now. I believe that the Jordanian policy is the wiser and smarter policy.... Jordan knows that all Israelis want peace and that a Likud government would continue the peace process, and this strengthens our conviction that those who seize the opportunity of dealing with us early will discover it to be in our mutual interests.

[Ni'mat] Did you sense real Jordanian anxiety about your party's policies?

[Netanyahu] Not at all, and that is because Jordan now well understands that we are committed to peace with our Arab neighbors...and I believe they view matters realistically, as is confirmed through the constant meetings which dispel the imaginary fear which might have emerged for well-known reasons.

[Ni'mat] How do you view the roles of the EU and the United States in the peace process?

[Netanyahu] Realistically, peace cannot be imposed on the region by the United States or Europe through the exercise of public relations.... Peace must stem from convictions within the Arab regimes that peace is in their interest. That is the only way to a stable peace.... Imported plans are useless.

[Ni'mat] There is still some ambiguity regarding your position on the final settlement with the Palestinians. Would you stop at the self-rule point or would you find solutions to issues pertaining to Jerusalem, the settlements, and the refugees?

[Netanyahu] I believe that we must negotiate on all these issues...and we would announce our position clearly with the start of such negotiations.

The problem is that the current Labor government has created very optimistic expectations on the Palestinian side, expectations which cannot be fulfilled by any Israeli Government that would be able to stay in power. The expectations about Palestinian repatriation rights and repartition of Jerusalem...are elements which enhance demands that would ultimately freeze and undermine the peace process instead of strengthening the spirit of moderation and realism. These matters...Jerusalem, the refugees, and water are very complex issues and we have to be honest when addressing them with our Arab neighbors by stating in advance the limits of draft agreements on such matters so as not to hit an impasse in the future. The problem is that what is now happening is exactly the opposite, and that threatens the peace process. We should not deceive anyone.

[Ni'mat] You seem to be optimistic about your chances of success despite the fact that the polls put the Labor Party five or six points ahead of you.

[Netanyahu] I do not believe that these daily readings should be viewed with much seriousness. We do not wage our election campaign on the basis of these opinion polls. We believe that the Israeli people want security with peace, and that is what we seek to achieve.

Jordan: Ministry Reportedly Expels Iraqi Military Attache

JN1004120796 Amman SAWT AL-MAR'AH in Arabic 10 Apr 96 p 13

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian Foreign Ministry decided to expel Jasim al-Dulaymi, the military attache at the Iraqi Embassy in Amman, without giving any reason for the decision.

Informed sources told SAWT AL-MAR'AH that, after returning from taking his children to school, the Iraqi diplomat was surprised to find men from a certain agency arriving at his house to offer him a senior post after Saddam Husayn is toppled. Al-Dulaymi, however, asked the men to leave his house. This prompted the Jordanian Foreign Ministry to give the Iraqi diplomat 48 hours to leave Jordan.

Reports say that the Iraqi Government will react to this move by declaring some Jordanian diplomats in Iraq persona non grata.

Jordan: Industrialists Seek Financing To Cover Exports to Iraq

JN1004104596 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 9 Apr 96 pp 1, 17

[Report by Nasir 'Arif]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of Jordanian industrialists has started negotiations with a number of local banks in an effort to obtain credit facilities to finance Jordanian exports to Iraq after the government recently decided to reduce the ceiling of its trade protocol with Baghdad by half.

Information given to AL-ASWAQ, which will be followed up to confirm its accuracy, says that, if successful, the group of industrialists expects financing to reach more than $200 million, which is approximately the same amount as the reduction the government made in the trade protocol with Iraq last January. The effort began after it became certain that the protocol, the type of goods, and the added value would have a negative effect on the Central Bank of Jordan's [CBJ] reserve of foreign currencies.

Information says that the initiative to obtain this amount of financing was launched after a visit by a group of industrialists to Baghdad. During the visit, an agreement was reached with the Iraqi Government to seek new arrangements that would secure the continued export of the same goods to Iraq in the same amounts that existed before the Jordanian Government made its financial and economic decision on the protocol.

The government, which previously said that the decision to reduce the ceiling of the trade protocol with Iraq was strictly an economic decision and has nothing to do with political issues, hopes that this will prevent the exacerbation of Jordanian debts on Baghdad, which, according to recent semiofficial statistics, has reached $1.2 billion. The government also hopes that this will not lead to withdrawals from the CBJ foreign currency reserves.

Prior arrangements in the trade protocol between Jordan and Iraq stipulate that the Jordanian Government must make an annual deposit of $400 million into an account at CBJ to pay for the goods exported by Jordanian companies to Iraq — goods that are allowed under the trade sanctions.

Jordan: Businessmen Express 'Skepticism' Over Iraqi Export Deal

JN1004112196 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 10 Apr 96 p 8

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Exporters negatively affected by the cut-down in trade with Iraq covered by the official Jordanian-Iraqi protocol for 1996 are negotiating with local banks to raise $200 million in financing to replace the government cover, a local report said Tuesday.

Details of the arrangement, reported by the AL-ASWAQ Arabic-language daily, were not available. But the report itself drew scepticism from the local business community.

The reportedly sought-for $200 million cover represents difference between the 1995 and 1996 protocols. The 1995 protocol was for roughly $400 million, covering both goods and services.

The report said the initiative to raise financing was launched after a group of Jordanian industrial exporters visited Iraq last month in a bid to explore common grounds which will allow for continued Jordanian exports despite the reduction in the volume covered by the protocol.

No independent confirmation was available of the AL-ASWAQ report, but market sources said it was likely that a dialogue was launched to explore means to ensuring that Jordanian exporters were not affected by the reduction in the official protocol.

"The main point in any financing arrangement will be the question of guarantee," said a businessman, noting that Iraq was not paying in cash for its food and imports from Jordan and the reason behind the Kingdom reducing the protocol was to check mounting Iraqi debts.

"What kind of guarantees can Iraq provide for payment?" said the businessman. "Baghdad seems to have run out of guarantees that could be obtained against Iraqi frozen assets abroad, and no bank is willing to accept a guarantee issued by the Central Bank of Iraq without a confirmation from any of the prime banks in Europe."

As such, explained the businessman, "It is very difficult to see how any financing could be raised to cover Jordanian exports to Iraq. Of course, technically an arrangement is possible under which banks are willing to extend long-term credit, say for one or two years at a relatively high interest rate."

But, observed the businessman, "such credit arrangements do not seem to be in the cards, given the uncertain situation in Iraq. Quite simply not many banks will be willing to carry the risk."

In any case, the businessman added, "it is highly unlikely that the Central Bank of Jordan, which has the final say in the matter, would approve of Jordanian commercial banks carrying $200 million in credit for Iraq at this point in time."

Iraq supplies Jordan's needs of oil under an exemption granted by the United Nations Sanctions Committee. In return for the cost of the oil, part of which is supplied free of cost, according to Iraqi officials, Jordan supplies food and medicine, also exempt from the sanctions against Iraq.

However, the actual amount of Jordanian exports to Iraq exceeded the cost of oil supplied to the Kingdom, and Baghdad's current debts to Amman are estimated at more than $1 billion.

Jordanian officials have explained that the exports of products with a higher content of Jordanian input would not be affected by the reduction. They point out that a good part of Jordanian exports to Iraq over the past years was products like vegetable oil imported from the Far East and processed/repacked and sent to Iraq.

"Jordan used to pay for imports of such material from its own foreign currency reserves, and the actual Jordanian input into the product was very limited," said an official, noting that the Kingdom had to put an end to the drain on its reserves at a time it stood in need to raise the reserves. "Actually Jordan was paying for the foreign currency needs of Iraq from the Kingdom's reserves, and this situation could not have been allowed to continue."

"The exports of a product like repacked/reprocessed vegetable oil compares with other products like pharmaceuticals and food items which have more than 80 per cent in Jordanian input," the official said.

Officials have also said that there were outstanding orders worth between $60 and $80 million for Jordanian products issued under the 1995 protocol and these were carried over to 1996, raising the actual exports to Iraq during the year to more than the amount covered in the protocol.

Lebanon: Reports to Cabinet Reject U.S. 'Claims' on Drugs, Rights

NC0904173996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Michel al-Murr has announced that in the next 48 hours he will present to the Council of Ministers two reports refuting claims by the U.S. Administration. The first report concerns the combating of drugs. The minister said the U.S. report on so-called human rights contained political positions based on false information provided by a certain Lebanese group that wanted to discredit the Lebanese Government.

Speaking after a meeting of the Central Security Council, Minister al-Murr explained that the Lebanese report on combating drugs draws on three reports by international organizations proving with facts and figures that what the Lebanese Government is saying about this is correct. Minister al-Murr stressed that the domestic security situation has improved in a significant and excellent way because of the joint intensive patrols carried out day and night by the Army and the Internal Security Forces in all regions of Lebanon.

Lebanon: Envoy on Hostages in Liberia, Coordination With U.S.

NC0904151796 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1415 GMT 9 Apr 96

[Telephone interview with Mansur al-'Abdallah, Lebanese charge d'affaires in Monrovia, in the Lebanese Embassy in Monrovia, by Andre 'Aziz Muhawish in Paris; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-'Abdallah] The African peacekeeping force has apparently begun to deploy in Monrovia. From my position here, I cannot say for sure whether this deployment is fast or slow. But we heard that the force has started to deploy. As regards the Lebanese hostages, three of them have been released.

[Muhawish] Out of how many altogether?

[Al-'Abdallah] About 36. [passage omitted]

[Muhawish] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz announced that he asked the Americans to help evacuate the Lebanese from Monrovia. Any new developments here?

[Al-'Abdallah] At the instructions of his excellency the minister, I am coordinating with the Americans. There is nothing tangible so far. But at any rate, it is difficult to assemble the Lebanese if there is no truce. We are trying everything possible. We promise you that we will work hard. And in accordance with the instructions of his excellency the minister, I will be the last to leave, that is if the Lebanese do leave. If we decide to stay, we will stay together.

[Muhawish] But people in Lebanon are very worried about their relatives in Monrovia, and news here is scarce.

[Al-'Abdallah] Look, so far, there have been no casualties or injuries among the Lebanese community. There are only material losses. We should not worry. As regards the hostages, we hope the problem will be solved peacefully.

Lebanon: Dallul—Israeli-Turkish Pact Threatens Peace Negotiations

NC0904173096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Muhsin Dallaul has described the Israeli-Turkish air force agreement as a flagrant threat to the negotiations in the region and an aggression against pan-Arab security, specifically the political and strategic security of Syria at this particular stage. He said Syria, through the honorable, national and pan-Arab positions of President Hafiz al-Asad, has effectively been the balancing factor in the Arab world. He said the agreement is a new and open attempt to pressure Syria.

Lebanon: Hizballah's Nasrallah on Retaliation for Israeli Attacks

NC0904163196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1415 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has said that the Bra'shit bomb was planted by the Israelis, who had intended to detonate it as mujahidin passed nearby. Nasrallah said this aggression is a flagrant violation of the so-called July [1993] understanding. He stressed that Lebanese civilians will be protected and defended via immediate retaliation. He reiterated: The time when we were killed and did not kill is past.

Nasrallah called on the settlers in northern Israel to demonstrate — if they really want to remain safe — to pressure their government into halting attacks against civilians in southern Lebanon.

Regarding the possibility of Israel's carrying out a military operation in south Lebanon, Nasrallah said: We are always prepared for every possibility, and we realize that Shim'on Peres needs victories of this kind to use in his electoral battle.

Lebanon: Further on Hizballah Leader's Retaliation Threat

NC1004064696 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has reiterated that what happened [in the Bra'shit explosion] was a clear violation of the so-called July [1993] understanding. He noted that all the evidence we have confirms that Israeli soldiers planted the devices and detonated them by remote control after hiding them. He noted that the devices were planted opposite an Israeli post.

Speaking at a news conference, Nasrallah said:

[Begin Nasrallah recording] By planting and exploding the device, the Israelis might have been trying to kill passing mujahidin. They thought the passers-by were mujahidin so they killed them. They might apologize or utter such words. We do not care about their intention, whether it was to kill civilians or mujahdin. These devices were planted inside the village and killed civilians. We are involved in defending civilians. Hence, the [words indistinct] civilians violated the understanding. [end recording]

Hizballah's secretary general stressed that there cannot be much patience when children are killed and that the enemy's apology does not bring back the dead. As for the enemy's statements and promise to change the game, Nasrallah said:

[Begin Nasrallah recording] The Israelis have always used this language. This is not the first time the enemy leaders have said they will change the rules of the game. They have often sought to change the rules. We cannot agree to any amendment to the so-called July understanding. Civilians on both sides should be spared. We have never taken the initiative in attacking or acting against civilians in northern Palestine. We have always fought back in defense and in reaction to the occupation army's actions against civilians in south Lebanon [words indistinct]. The enemy says it will change. Let him do what he wants. We are used to this language and these Israeli threats. We know the arena we fight in and we know who we face. [end recording]

Nasrallah called on the settlers in northern Palestine to demonstrate and demand that the Zionist enemy government halt its attacks on Lebanese civilians—something that would be in their interest—rather than demand military action. He warned that such action will only bring more wounds, death, and destruction. He stressed: The time when we were killed but did not kill is behind us.

Syria: 'Source' Comments on Reports of al-Asad-Peres Meeting

JN1004052196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0422 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on reports by some radio stations that President Hafiz al-Asad has agreed to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, a Syrian information source said: Despite the fact that the idea of the meeting has been proposed several times, both through the international media and European and U.S. officials, Syria's response has always emphasized that such a meeting is linked to the end of the Israeli occupation.

Syria: TISHRIN Criticizes U.S. Military Exercises in Jordan

JN1004093396 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0745 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 10 Apr (SANA)—TISHRIN warns of the dangers of the U.S. maneuvers and military presence in Jordan, noting that this constitutes a serious precedent for the region. In a news analysis today, the paper adds that the U.S. military presence in Jordan — where U.S. fighter planes and their pilots will be stationed on Friday [12 April] — will fuel Israel to show more intransigence and arrogance.

The paper adds that, all over the world, military bases are being closed and people are calling for the removal of the remaining bases and all traces of foreign presence in their countries. The U.S. presence in Jordan will escalate the tension in the region. This proves that the so-called new world order is not aimed at extinguishing old hotbeds of tension, but at creating new ones.

TISHRIN notes that the U.S. planes will arrive in Jordan on the pretext of training Jordanian pilots to use the fighter planes that will be given to them in late 1997. The pretext of training, however, is false, because training in the United State would be more useful and late 1997 is a long time from now.

Regarding reports that the U.S. planes will target hard-line Islamic religious movements, TISHRIN says: Naive observers know that religious hard-liners cannot be confronted with planes. This affirms that the U.S. maneuvers and the U.S. military presence in Jordan have other objectives. Observers are unanimous that these objectives consist of two parts. The first aims to pressure the Jordanian people, who oppose the Wadi al-'Arabah accord. The second aims to intimidate the countries that refused to accept the Israeli positions and stuck to the bases of the peace process.

TISHRIN adds that observers link the U.S. presence to the Israeli-Turkish agreement that allows Israel to use Turkish military bases to threaten its neighbors. This affirms that there is a scheme aimed at subjugating the region and forcing it into unfair agreements with Israel.

TISHRIN concludes: The U.S. military presence in Jordan cannot be considered a pacifying factor. It is a potential cause of increased tension and an explosion. Peace can only prevail in the region when Israel implements the resolutions of international legitimacy and complies with the Madrid conference principles.

Syria: Radio Praises Chirac's Call For 'Effective' European Role

JN0904201096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 9 Apr 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Just before returning to his country from Cairo, French President Jacques Chirac called on Israel to fully withdraw from the Golan and southern Lebanon. He said: The solution is clear and well known; namely, full Israeli withdrawal in return for full peace. President Chirac declared that Europe plays an effective role in the peace process, and not only the role of a financier, and that it should also become a sponsor of the peace process. President Chirac asserted the need to advance the peace process on the Syrian track and for Israel to withdraw fully from the Golan. He also called for doubling efforts so that 1996 would be a year of peace in the region.

President Chirac's statements at Cairo University are in total harmony with Syria's declared and often-repeated position. On every occasion, Syria called for full peace in return of full Israeli withdrawal. It also called for equitable [mutakafi'] security that guarantees the interests of all. Syria called on Europe to shoulder its responsibility and to perform the role required of it. By virtue of being a neighbor, sharing common interests and historical relations with the states of the region, Europe is closer to understanding the problems of the region and more capable of interacting with them. Syria sought to involve Europe in the Madrid conference. However, Israel prevented a European participation through clear refusal and blatant objection.

Israel never wanted peace. It participated in the Madrid conference against its will. Since the very beginning, it sought to abort this conference and made frequent attempts over the past four years to derail and if possible undermine it. It did so by placing obstacles and impediments; avoiding international legitimacy resolutions; promoting partial, unilateral, and lame settlements; refusing to withdraw from the Golan and southern Lebanon; and exercising the scorched-earth policy against Lebanon, thus threatening Lebanon and Syria together.

Israel excluded Europe from the peace process out of its awareness that Europe is serious and concerned with the entrenchment of peace—a true, just, and comprehensive peace—and that it will not turn a blind eye to Israeli maneuvers seeking to undermine the very basis of the peace process. President Chirac called on Europe to assume an effective and essential role because he saw with his own eyes that the peace process is being jeopardized by U.S. bias toward Israel and by its abandonment of the role of a full, impartial, and fairminded partner—a role to which it was committed when it pledged to bring about a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

The peace process lost much of its credibility and its chances of success became very slim. This is because Israel rejected the formula which was proposed by Syria and which was adopted by the French president today; namely, the formula of a full Israeli withdrawal in return for a full peace. Israel rejected the formula of equitable [mutakafi'] security. Indeed, it pulled out of the Maryland negotiations despite its previous reiterations that peace is more important than elections. It then violated its agreements with the self-rule authority, despite the fragility of these agreements and the fact that they are far removed from the rights and demands of the Palestinian people. Israel also further escalated the situation in southern Lebanon.

Israel did all this, while the Unites States stood idly by doing nothing except finding justifications for Israeli actions which conflict with the peace process in both letter and spirit. Israel went even further by concluding a military agreement with Turkey to threaten Syria's underbelly, attempt to blackmail it, and threaten Arab and regional security. All these practices provide conclusive evidence that Israel and peace are poles apart.

Syria called for resuming the Madrid conference in a bid to rescue the peace process from collapse. Today, it renews this call and welcomes a French and European role in the peace process. It does not ask anyone to take its side, but to take the side of rightful and just principles. It calls for a real implementation of international legitimacy resolutions.

Syria: Foreign Ministry Official on Turkey-Israel Accord

JN1004102596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Arab and international reaction to the military agreement between Turkey and Israel continues. [passage omitted]

In Damascus, Syrian Assistant Foreign Minister 'Adnan 'Imran yesterday received Arab ambassadors and heads of Arab diplomatic missions. He explained Syria's stand on this agreement, noting the dangers behind returning to the logic of alliances.

Our correspondent in Damascus Thana' al-Imam asked 'Adnan 'Imran about this agreement.

[Begin 'Imran recording] Turkey and Israel signed a security and strategic military agreement. It is natural that this agreement is a cause of worry and surprise to us. It is a cause of worry because Turkey is a Muslim country and a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC]. Turkey has obligations toward OIC principles and resolutions, some of which were issued in Istanbul. Turkey's signing of this agreement comes at a time when Israel is occupying Arab Jerusalem and is usurping Muslim holy shrines. Therefore, this issue is a cause of great worry. How could a Muslim country carry out such a serious act?

This agreement is also surprising because it raises tension and causes serious complications in the region at a time when international efforts are being exerted to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Israel is trying to create a situation that is dangerous to the countries in this region. Israel wants to strike at the ties between Turkey and all Arab and Islamic countries. The people of Turkey are Muslims, and we are confident they will not agree to being protected by Israeli planes at a time when Israel is violating all Islamic holy shrines. This agreement was born to fail. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Syria: Arab Envoys Informed of Position on Turkish-Israeli Accord

JN0904180996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Assistant Foreign Minister 'Adnan 'Imran received the ambassadors and accredited heads of Arab missions in Damascus at noon today and informed them of Syria's position on the military agreement concluded between Turkey and Israel.

The assistant foreign minister asserted that this agreement seriously affects not only neighboring states, but also pan-Arab and Islamic states' security. He said that it is serious for Turkey, which is a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference [OIC], to sign a military cooperation agreement with Israel, thus disregarding the OIC principles and resolutions, at a time when Israel continues to occupy Arab lands and usurp holy Jerusalem and the holy Islamic shrines, including al-Aqsa Mosque.

He asserted that the conclusion of this military agreement increases tension in the region, and conflicts with international efforts to realize comprehensive and just peace. He also pointed to the dangers of returning to the logic of alliances which could have serious repercussions on the entire region.

The assistant foreign minister also stated that despite the good Syrian-Greek relations, Syria did not sign any military agreements with Greece — something which the Turkish Foreign Ministry is aware of. The assistant foreign minister said that Syria asserted its eagerness to preserve good neighborly relations with Turkey provided that these relations are based on respect for international law. He asserted that in order for cooperation between the two states to achieve the required success, the Turkish side needs to show a positive response, the significance of which the Turkish officials do not seem to realize so far.

The assistant foreign minister yesterday summoned the Turkish ambassador in Damascus and informed him of Syria's concern and surprise at the Turkish-Israeli agreements and the objectives of these agreements. He asked the Turkish ambassador to provide official explanations and clarifications on the matter.

Syria: Press Warns Against Regional Impact of Turkish-Israeli 'Alliance'

JN1004074996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0457 GMT 10 Apr 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "The Turkish-Israeli Alliance Threatens the Region," AL-BA'TH discusses the Turkish-Israeli alliance through which Turkey deliberately violated the resolutions and recommendations of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. At this time in particular, the paper says, Turkey deliberately fanned the fire and created new tensions that are detrimental to regional security and peace.

AL-BA'TH adds that the new Turkish-Israeli alliance will lead to reckless actions that will expose all of western Asia to the harm entertained by the Zionist leaders.

AL-BA'TH asks what benefit Turkey will reap from the alliance with the Zionists and the outposts of their Torah state on the outskirts of Ankara.

AL-BA'TH says: The Turkish-Israeli relationship is an old one and has been a Turkish domestic affair. But when this relationship turns into a military alliance that threatens the Arabs and their security and jeopardizes regional security as a whole, then it becomes a flagrant aggression under the pretext of domestic affairs.

AL-BA'TH concludes: The Turkish-Israeli alliance is not a coincidence. It came at a time when Israel is obstructing the peace efforts and escalating its aggression against Lebanon, the Palestinians, and Jerusalem, where Arab and Muslim holy places are located. Did the timing the hostile alliance come to complement the Israeli preparations and intentions to explode the situation in the region and prepare for bringing the entire Arab and Islamic world under the Zionist guardianship?

Under the headline "Arab Laxity," AL-THAWRAH highlights the dangers to the Arab region and the Arab nation as a result of the booby-trapped peace promises. It has been proved that Israel uses this peace as a cover to implement its schemes. The least that can be said about these schemes is that they seek to undermine the regional Arab order and prepare for a new Middle East order. In addition to its economic, cultural, social, and political dangers, the military claws of such an order have begun to appear.

AL-THAWRAH says that the Turkish-Israeli agreement on close cooperation to allow aircraft from each side to use the other side's airspace and bases has many serious implications — not only in terms of its ability to expose the reality of Turkish policies on Syria and the Arabs, the numerous charges that are being leveled against Syria, and the hostile water policies, but also of in terms of its content and timing. The agreement gives clear indications about the future formula of the regional alliances, all of which are aimed against the Arab nation, despite some signs about the participation of Arab parties in some role linked to this formula, whether within or outside of the Turkish-Israeli understanding.

AL-THAWRAH indicates that what is being planned for the region does not pose a threat just to Syria, but also to all the Arabs and region as a geographic entity. Giving Israel a free hand in the region and its neighborhood through the Sharm al-Shaykh summit on the pretext of combating terrorism is not only terrorism, aggression, and assassination, but also another step toward building the Israeli security formula in the region, in which only Israel has the right to define terrorism and, consequently, to do anything it deems appropriate to its policies.

AL-THAWRAH concludes that there are few indications about pressures or attempts to extort Syria. However, the paper says, turning a deaf ear to the dangers events that risk the future of the entire region is one significant way to help Israel complete the scheme of hegemony, the negative impact of which has begun to appear in the Arab region.

Syria: Editorial Criticizes Israeli-Turkish-Jordanian 'Alliance'

JN0904105896 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0750 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, 9 Apr (SANA) — [passage omitted] AL-THAWRAH says: It is clear that Israel, which obstructed the peace efforts, does not seek peace, but claims to do so — out of its hypocrisy — in order to conceal its aggressive intentions. The paper adds that Israel's role has been exposed with the disclosure of its military alliance with Jordan and Turkey to surround and besiege Syria.

In a commentary today, AL-THAWRAH notes that this alliance emerged after Turkish President Suleyman Demirel's visit to Israel and was formed — at the Jordanian level — with the conclusion of the Wadi al-'Arabah agreement. Among other things, the Wadi al-'Arabah agreement provides for military talks, the exchange of military information, and the implementation of practical, applicable steps as part of the so-called confidence- and security-building measures.

AL-THAWRAH notes that this agreement is evident in the joint military maneuvers and Israeli warplanes' sorties over all parts of Jordan in a muscle-flexing show of the power of this alliance and to terrify the Jordanian forces that oppose the Wadi al-'Arabah agreement.

AL-THAWRAH says the reality of this alliance, which is hostile to the nation, is obvious to those who follow the march of Jordanian-Israeli relations, the intensified contacts and visits between the two sides and the rapid development of relations. The results of all this do not favor the Arab causes that Syria is defending.

The paper notes that the Jordanian chief of staff's visit to Israel and his tour of Israeli military bases was an important sign of this alliance, which is directed against Syria, a just and comprehensive peace, and the international resolutions, and opposes the U.S. initiative itself.

AL-THAWRAH says: We hoped that no sisterly Arab country would be involved in such an alliance against its nation. Syria, which these alliances are trying to surround and besiege, reaffirms to the world its firm stand on peace, which is sought by international legitimacy and the U.S. initiative. Syria supports peace on these well-known principles, which were also the bases of the Madrid conference. Syria can never accept anything short of full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: Anyone who thinks that Syria will yield to pressure or be intimidated by such alliances is mistaken. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Kabul Government Reacts 'Coolly' to UN Arms Embargo Proposal

BK1004110496 Hong Kong AFP in English
1044 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, April 10 (AFP) — The Kabul government Wednesday [10 April] reacted cooly to a suggestion raised in the UN security council that an arms embargo should be imposed on the Afghanistan's warring factions.

"The idea of an arms embargo alone, without the support of other UN peace measures, at the present time is not very practical," a defence ministry official told AFP.

"In our view it could not be effective in the present climate in Afghanistan as certain borders are so porous that arms flow freely across them into Afghanistan," he added.

The official claimed that Pakistan was supporting the Taleban militia trying to topple the government and that Islamabad was sending arms and munitions across its mutual border with Afghanistan.

"If such an embargo was implemented parallel to decisive UN peace measures, including a guarantee of a halt to foreign interference and the UN monitoring of traffic coming from Pakistan, it could be useful and effective, " the official added.

The comments came a day after the US delegate to a special UN Security Council debate on strife-torn Afghanistan said that several countries supported the idea of an embargo as a means of halting the factional fighting which has torn the country apart for four years.

The mujahedeen groups who ousted the Soviets from here in 1989, turned on each other in an acrimonious struggle for power after taking over the government in 1992.

Since then more than 25,000 civilians have died in battles all over the country.

The fighting has been fuelled by the huge stockpiles of arms left here by the Soviet army after their withdrawal and by the resupply of various warring factions by other countries.

Afghanistan: Radio Views Aims of Senator Brown Visit

LD0904194596 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto
to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An American senator has arrived in Afghanistan for talks with the Afghan leaders in connection with resolving the Afghan problem. According to agency reports, U.S. Senator Hank Brown, who was visiting Pakistan, left for Afghanistan and had a three-hour meeting with Ustad [president] Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Mas'ud at Bagram airbase.

He then left Kabul for Nangarhar. The report says that besides meeting leaders of the Kabul administration Hank Brown will also meet leaders of the High Coordination Council and the Taleban and some other important personalities.

Observers believe the American senator's visit to Afghanistan shows that America is once again showing interest in Afghanistan. Some observers are of the opinion that America wants to change the situation along the Afghanistan-Iran border. For this reason it has already started covert operations against Iran. They also believe that America has brought pressure to bear on Pakistan for its good relations with Iran. Pakistan considers Iran a friendly neighbor. However, relations between them have recently cooled. The source added that the important goal of Brown's visit is to sabotage the Hezb-e Eslami-Kabul administration talks, because America is afraid of a Hezb-e Eslami government in Afghanistan.

According to another report, the Indian government has turned down a request by the American senator to visit New Delhi. According to Pakistani newspapers, he wants to visit New Delhi for talks on Kashmir with the Indian authorities, but they have refused to allow him to visit the country.

The report says that after Brown's visit, the State Department official in charge of South Asian affairs will visit Afghanistan.

Afghanistan: Taleban Rocket Attack on Kabul City Injures 15

LD0904185496 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network
in Pashto 1530 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night and today, Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired rockets at the residential areas of Kabul city.

Bakhtar reports that last night and today, Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired 12 rockets at the residential areas of Kabul city, as a result of which 15 people were injured. Two houses were also damaged.

Afghanistan: Government Forces Capture District in Ghowr Province

LD0904193796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Saghar District in Ghowr Province has been captured by Islamic Army forces. Quoting an armed forces source, BAKHTAR reported that the Islamic Army forces and mojahedin in Ghowr Province launched a successful operation in Saghar under the command of Mohammad Ebrahim Malekzad, as a result of which the district came under the control of the Islamic army forces. Dozens of Benazir Bhutto's Taleban were killed or injured in the operation and four of them were taken prisoner by the mojahedin. An 82mm artillery piece, two mortars, two DSK's [machineguns], an RPG, seven rockets, and a quantity of light arms with an assortment of ammunition were also captured by the mojahedin. The report adds that the mojahedin are advancing toward Tolak and Parcha districts.

Afghanistan: Kabul Government Launches Dual Attacks Against Taleban

BK1004110696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1050 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, April 10 (AFP) — The Afghan government has heavily bombed Taleban militia positions south of Kabul and has seized part of central Gor province from the warriors, officials said Wednesday [10 April].

Government jets staged five bombing runs on the Islamic fighter's posts south of the besieged capital Wednesday in retaliation for heavy artillery and rocket attacks on its posts in the area, they said.

"The fighting started when the enemy began targetting our positions with their heavy weapons. We then decided to respond by bombing them in order to halt the attacks," the defence ministry spokesman said.

The Taleban have been knocking on Kabul's southern door for the last six months, threatening to seize the battered capital.

The raid came two days after troops loyal to President Borhanoddin Rabbani captured the Saghar district of Gor — a zone which borders on the Taleban controlled province of Herat — from the movement, he said.

"The fighting for the area was very intense and the Taleban resisted violently before being defeated," the official told AFP.

He refused to comment on the strategic significance of the capture of the district of Gor, part of which is controlled by the Kabul government and part of which is held by the Taleban.

No independent confirmation of the victory could immediately be obtained here.

The official said Saghar district had been held be the Islamic warriors since they swept up control of neighbouring and strategically crucial Herat city and province from the government last September.

The surprise loss of Herat, once a government stronghold, dealt a severe blow to Rabbani's administration and boosted the Taleban's confidence, apparently spurring it into lay siege to Kabul last October.

The Taleban have pledged they will oust Rabbani's government and install Islamic Sharia law across Afghanistan, which has been battered by more than 16 years of war.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Zia, Sheikh Hasina Address Rallies; Violence Reported

BK0904160496 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has called upon the people to rally around her party's banner to strengthen the country's independence and sovereignty, democracy, and economic progress. She was addressing a mammoth rally at the Chittagong Outer Stadium this afternoon. She also called upon the people to unitedly counter those thwarting the process of democracy and national development. The rally chaired by BNP Joint Secretary General Abdullah Al Noman was addressed by Professor Badruddoja Chowdhury, Oil Ahmed, and Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mian.

Bangladesh Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina has called upon the people to maintain a peaceful atmosphere for holding the upcoming parliamentary elections. Addressing a mammoth rally in the city today, Sheikh Hasina said that her party will ensure the independence of the judiciary and the autonomy of radio and television. She added that her party, if elected to power, will ensure the expansion of education, including women's education, and of small-scale industry and public health facilities.

The Awami League chief said that there is no need to renew the 25-year agreement with India. If elected to power, the Awami League will secure its share of the Ganges River water. Among others, the rally was addressed by Salahuddin Yusuf, Amir Hussain Amu, Tofaeul Ahmed, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor

Mohammad Amir, and a number of local and central leaders of the party.

[Hong Kong AFP in English 1504 GMT on 9 April reports that at least three people were killed and approximately 200 wounded when violence erupted at the rally addressed by Khaleda Zia.

AFP reports: "Supporters of Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) came under bomb and gun attacks as they marched to the rally outside the Chittagong stadium, witnesses said. The city is a stronghold of the Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed.

"'Terrorists launched the attacks,' one police officer told AFP.

"Former cabinet minister Abdulllah Al-Noman, a member of Zia's BNP, announced at the meeting that two activists were killed and some 200 injured during the march. The third victim was the headmistress of a local college returning home in a pedicab who died in a crossfire, police said, adding a large number of suspected trouble makers were detained."

Citing hospital sources, AFP reports that the death toll could rise, with 135 people having been admitted to hospitals in the city. The press agency adds that this was the first major instance of political violence since Zia stepped down as prime minister and the parliament was dissolved by the president on 30 March to make way for fresh polls under a neutral caretaker government.]

Bangladesh: New Election Chief Takes Oath; Election Official Resigns

BK0904125596 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mohammad Abu Hena has taken the oath as chief election commissioner in Dhaka today. He was sworn in by Chief Justice Abu Taher Mohammad Afzal. Abu Hena was appointed chief election commissioner by the president yesterday. He replaced Justice A.K.M. Sadeque, who resigned on 6 April. Among others, the brief swearing-in ceremony was attended by Musatafa Kamal, senior judge of the Supreme Court's appellate division, and Mohammad Faizur Razzak, newly appointed secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat.

Election Commissioner Justice Abdul Jalil has resigned. He submitted his resignation letter to President Abdur Rahman Biswas today, which was accepted.

Bangladesh: Caretaker Government Vows To Revitalize Economy

BK0904131496 Hong Kong AFP in English 0922 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, April 9 (AFP) — Bangladesh's Finance Advisor Wahiduddin Mahmud vowed to international donors Tuesday that the caretaker government would revitalise the country's economy, shattered by two years' political turmoil.

Mahmud was speaking to AFP after meeting in Dhaka with representatives of major donor agencies and countries, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, United Nations Development Program and the United States.

"Our main assurance to the donors is that we will leave [word indistinct] economy for the next-elected government with downsliding of macro-indicators reversed," he said.

Mahmud last week joined the 11-member caretaker government whose main task is to hold fresh elections within three months.

He said the donors were also assured of rapid implementation of donor-funded projects through efficient management.

A university teacher, Mahmud said the interim government had initiated steps to get the stalled economy back to its feet within the mandated period which expires June 28 with the election of a new government.

He did not elaborate.

The country has faced two years of street unrest due to protests waged by Bangladesh's three main opposition parties to force ouster of prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party government,.

They included 170 days of general strikes and shutdowns disrupting economic and industrial activity.

Mahmud's meeting with donor representatives followed a recent warning by the World Bank that Bangladesh was in a "highly disadvantageous" position in competing for future allocation from the International Development Association, the bank's concessionary lending affiliate, due to poor progress in project implementation.

Bangladeshi officials blamed the prolonged political stalemate for the setback, which, they added, had stalled development activity besides damaging other areas of the economy.

Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserves declined to 2.24 billion US dollars in February from a record 3.4 billion dollars in April last year and the annual inflation rate rose to 8.5 percent from four percent in the same period.

The economy's biggest victim was the export-oriented garment sector, which lost millions of dollars in cancelled shipment orders from foreign buyers.

Zia stepped down on March 30 in favour of the caretaker government headed by former chief justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman.

"We hope the caretaker government's priority on reactivating the economy would help Bangladesh to overcome the damages made by political events," Eimi Watanabe, coordinator of the Dhaka-based UN agencies, told AFP after meeting with Mahmud.

The meeting came ahead of this year's aid consortium meeting on Bangladesh in Paris scheduled in July.

"We apprised the caretaker government of our good-will to help Bangladesh's development," she said.

India

India: Kashmiri Leader Reportedly Escapes Murder Attempt

BK0904165196 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Shabbir Ahmad Shah, a prominent leader of Jammu and Kashmir All Parties Hurriyat Conference, had a narrow escape today when a murder attempt was made on him at a seminar in New Delhi. Details from our special correspondent Ghulam Nabi Khayal:

[Begin recording] According to reports, Shabbir Shah was speaking at a function here in Delhi University, which was organized by All India People's Resistance Forum. The seminar rallied around the repression by the authorities against innocent people in different Indian provinces. Mr. Shah spoke at length about human rights violations being committed by the forces in Kashmir. This resulted in a group of the activists of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad menacingly moving toward Shah with a bid on his life. Shah was, however, escorted to safety by the sponsors of the seminar and some other senior participants. Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad is the youth wing of the extremist Bharatiya Janata Party. The Organizers Committee for Coordination of Nationalities and Democratic Movements has also condemned the attack on Shabbir Shah. [end recording]

In Srinagar, All Parties Hurriyat Conference strongly condemned the murder attempt on Shabbir Ahmad Shah and expressed grave concern over the fact that India, under the cover of the so-called elections, has increased its brutalities in the occupied valley and is engaged in a catch-and-kill operation.

And in Srinagar, Mir Waiz Manzil, the headquarters of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, was ransacked by Indian troops. People inside the building were beaten up and furniture and records destroyed. The political secretary to the chairman, All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mohammad Yaqub Advocate, told PTV on telephone the Indian Border Security Force surrounded the Hurriyat Conference headquarters in a certain raid, broke open doors, and arrested several All Parties Hurriyat Conference workers. They also fired in the air to harass the people in the building. Mr. Mohammad Yaqub said when several thousands came out of their houses to protest the cowardly act of Indian troops, they were lathi [baton]-charged and fired at. Indian Border Security Force operation was continuing till last reports came in.

Meanwhile, in occupied Kashmir, 20 more people were reported martyred during repressive operations by Indian occupation forces. Six of them were shot dead in custody in Srinagar alone, triggering forceful anti-India demonstrations. The people took to the streets and raised wrathful slogans against Indian savagery and in favor of independence. Mujahideen in retaliatory strikes killed nine Indian soldiers in Rafiabad, Lora Hama, and Sopor areas.

India: Suspected Militants Kill 12 in Manipur Ambush

BK1004031896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Manipur, at least 12 persons, including the superintendent of police, were killed in an ambush by suspected underground militants at (Tronglowbi Kampai) area in the Bishenpur District last evening. Agencies, quoting official sources, said the killed included nine police personnel and three civilians. One policeman sustained serious bullet injuries. The militants attacked the police party when it was proceeding toward Churachandpur District from Bishenpur. Senior police officials have rushed to the spot and a massive search operation has been launched to nab the culprits.

India: Roundup of Election-Related Developments

BK0704081896

[FBIS Report] Delhi All India Radio Network in English at 0245 GMT on 6 April carries several reports on election-related developments. The radio reports: "Political parties continue to release their lists of candidates following fresh alliances in their efforts to meet today's deadline. The Congress-I announced a revised list of candidates for Karnataka. The chairman of the Minorities Cell in the state, Mohammad Abdullah Sharif, will contest the Bangalore North Lok Sabha constituency, replacing Mr. Y. Sayeed Ahmad. Announcing the list in New Delhi last night, the AICC [All India Congress Committee] general secretary, Mr. Madhav Singh Solanki, said that former MP Mr. K.S. Vir Bhadrappa will be the party candidate from Bellary in place of Mr. K.C. Kondaiah. The candidate for Shimoga will be the sitting MP, Mr. K.G. Shivappa, while Mr. R.N. Naik will contest the North Kanara seat in place of Mr. R.S. Bhagawat."

Another report says that the ruling Janata Dal party in Karnataka has reached an "understanding" with the Communist Party of India-Marxist on seat sharing for the parliamentary elections. "The Janata Dal released names of eight candidates yesterday, including three ministers. The party is likely to finalize the nominations for the Tumkur, Kolar, and Kanakapura seats today. The Bidar seat has been (?kept) for the CPI-M as per the understanding."

Another report adds: "The national president of Samajwadi Party, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, has dissolved the state unit of the Bihar Samajwadi Party. Talking to newsmen in Lucknow last evening, he said the new state executive will be announced shortly."

Another report states: "The Samajwadi Janata Party candidate from the Gwalior constituency in Madhya Pradesh has been instructed by the party president and former prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, to withdraw from the contest in favor of the former union minister, Mr. Madhavrao Scindia."

Delhi All India Radio Network in English at 1230 GMT reports: "In Madhya Pradesh, two former union ministers, Mr. Kamal Nath and Mr. Arvind Netam, have withdrawn their papers for the Lok Sabha seats. Mr. Kamal Nath had filed nomination for the Chhindwara seat as an independent candidate. His wife is the official Congress-I nominee for the seat. Mr. Arvind Netam, who wanted to contest for the Lok Sabha seat from the Kanker constituency, had to withdraw as the Congress-I party did not give him the ticket and selected his wife as the official party nominee."

India: Some 16,000 Candidates Running in Lok Sabha Elections

BK0704093096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The decks are clear for a high-pitched campaign for the ensuing elections to the Lok Sabha and six assemblies with the deadline for the withdrawal of candidature ending yesterday. According to available information nearly 16,000 candidates are left in the fray for 543 Lok Sabha seats, and 16,900 for 914 seats in six assemblies.

Among those who pulled out of the contest at the 11th hour are the former union ministers, Mr. Kamal Nath from Chhindwara, Mr. Arvind Netam from Kanker in Madhya Pradesh; and Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat from East Delhi and Sadar constituencies; the Janata Dal leader, Mr. S. Jaipal Reddy, from Mahbubnagar in Andhra Pradesh; and former Karnataka Chief Minister Mr. M. Veerappa Moily from Chikmagalur. Mr. Bhagat told PTI that he will now campaign for the Congress candidate in Delhi and other parts of the country as desired by the party high command.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Congress-I has fielded candidates for 76 out of 85 Lok Sabha constituencies. A joint candidate of the Indira Congress-Tiwari [T] and the CPI [Communist Party of India] will contest the Banda seat. The state Janata Dal-Ram Ashray faction withdrew its candidates from Nainital and Jhansi parliamentary constituency from where Indira Congress-Tiwari President Mr. Narain Dutt Tiwari is contesting. According to an agreement reached between the two parties, the Congress-T has left Saharanpur constituency for the Janata Dal-Ram Ashray faction. Party stalwarts and veterans who are left in the fray in the state include the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, who is seeking reelection from Lucknow; former Prime Minister Mr. Chandra Shekhar contesting from District Ballia constituency; Samajwadi Party National President Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav from Mainpuri; and BSP [Bahujan Samaj Party] leader Mr. Kansi Ram from Phulpur. Mr. Kansi Ram is also contesting from Hoshiarpur in Punjab.

In Maharashtra, 79 candidates withdrew from the race leaving 164 in the fray for 48 Lok Sabha constituencies. Prominent among them are the Lok Sabha speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil, Union Ministers Mr. A.R. Antulay, Mr. Suresh Kalmadi, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Mr. Vilas Mutemwar, and Mr. Mukul Wasnik, and former chief minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, and the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] general secretary, Mr. Pramod Mahajan.

A record number of over 1,400 candidates including the chief minister, Mr. A.K. Antony, and a majority of his cabinet colleagues and the opposition leader, Mr. V.S. Achyutanandan, are in the fray for the 140 member assembly in Kerala.

In Pondicherry, nearly 214 candidates withdrew their papers leaving 270 in the field for the assembly elections. The DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] has allotted six assembly seats to the Tamil Manila Congress, TMC, under an agreement reached between the two parties yesterday. Addressing a joint press conference in Pondicherry, the party leader said the DMK will contest 18 of the 30 assembly seats while the TMC will contest six, and the Communist Party of India three seats.

The senior leader of the Samajwadi Party, Dr. Krishna Nigam, has resigned from the primary membership of the party protesting against what she called improper allocation of tickets to women candidates in the Lok Sabha elections. Talking to newsmen in Varanasi, she said she would fight the parliamentary elections as an independent.

India: BJP Declares Readiness To Deploy Nuclear Weapons

BK0904053896 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 8 Apr 96 p 3

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] yesterday declared that it would exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons, go ahead with the production and deployment of the Agni and Prithvi missiles, and seek "sovereign equality among nations" in the conduct of its security and foreign policy, if it was elected to power.

In a thinly veiled attack on the US, the party manifesto said it rejected the notion of "political and economic hegemonism...(and would) not accept any interference in our country's internal affairs."

Defending its vision of India "as a strong power and a major player in the world arena," the manifesto says its priorities in defence diplomacy would be to set up a national security council, a body which would defend the security needs of this country, and re-evaluate India's nuclear policy.

Mounting an attack on what the conveyor of the external affairs cell of the party, Brash Mishra, called the "flip flop" attitude of the Congress government on security and foreign policy, the manifesto said the BJP would not sign the comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT) unless the other world powers agreed to a time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons.

Neither would it sign the missile material control regime (FMCR), a convention that seeks to curtail production of missile material like plutonium, nor the missile technology control regime (MTCR), a body that seeks to ban the export of dual use technologies to member states which have not signed the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty].

The BJP said it would attempt to redefine India's great power status with reference to its relationships with its neighbours, especially Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, and aggressively seek a participatory role in multilateral organizations like the Security Council.

The party said it would launch a vigorous campaign for a permanent membership for India in an expanded Security Council.

The party's foreign policy attack clearly focuses on Pakistan, whom it accuses of "fomenting insurgency, seeking to create instability and unrest in India." In this regard, it said, it unequivocally affirmed India's sovereignty over the whole of Jammu & Kashmir, including Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

The US came a close second on the BJP's foreign policy agenda, with the party promising to maintain a relationship based on "mutual interest and a congruence of interests." However, the manifesto scolded the US for "suffering from lack of vision."

India: BJP Promises 'Sweeping' Changes

BK0904055096 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 8 Apr 96 pp 1, 20

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], while making a strong reiteration of its Hindutva philosophy, has promised to bring about "sweeping changes" in the political, economic and social spheres in the event of coming to power.

The party's election manifesto released by its president L. K. Advani here today, pledges to end the Congress party's "50 years of misrule" and usher in "a strong, clean and responsive administration". As Mr Advani put it, the BJP will bring about "a strong and secure India, a people-friendly Government, a debt-free economy, a corruption-free administration and a conflict-free society".

Expectedly, the 80-page document covers a whole lot of familiar ground, be it over the BJP opting for the nuclear deterrent, facilitating construction of a "magnificent Ram temple at Ayodhya", abrogating Article 370 of the Constitution to end the special status to Jammu and Kashmir, or introducing the Uniform Civil Code. The party has thus sought to make it clear that its stand on all these issues remains true and firm.

On the economic plane, the manifesto reflects the party's oft men honed Swadeshi line of thinking. "The BJP will promote free market policies, but will not allow globalisation to subvert our nation's economic interests," it says.

The party has stuck to the position that foreign investment will be welcome but only in areas which require high technology and high financial input namely the infrastructure sector.

Significantly, the manifesto does not talk of reversing the economic reforms launched by the Narasimha Rao Government even while blasting the latter's economic policies as a whole. "BJP stands for a modern and progressive India, open to new Ideas, new technology and fresh capital. A modern India to the BJP is not a westernised India; a pale copy of the Western economic models".

As for its dispensation towards minorities, the BJP promises full protection to the rights of minority communities but has ruled out a "policy of appeasement" which, in its view, has "stood in the way of their integration with the national mainstream". The BJP, says the manifesto, will strictly adhere to its policy of "justice for all and appeasement of none".

While coming down heavily on corruption which is the "single greatest wrong under 50 years of Congress misrule", the BJP manifesto has promised to appoint a Lok Pal to look into allegations of corruption against all those holding public office, including the Prime minister. It will also be mandatory for all elected representatives to declare their assets within 90 days of election. The misuse of investigating agencies will be ended, it says.

Mr Advani, while releasing the document, exuded confidence about his party dislodging the Congress." The popular mood is overwhelmingly in favour of uprooting the present Government and replacing the prevailing system of governance With a strong, clean and responsive administration." According to him, the TINA (there is no alternative) factor has begun to operate in the BJP's favour. The national mood, he claimed, was for a "parivartan" with Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee at the helm.

Even while swearing by its Hindutva ideology, the BJP's professed "cutting edge", the manifesto says: "The BJP believes in one nation, one people, one culture. We are, therefore, committed to promoting Social reconciliation rather than conflict. We are resolved to put an end to the politics of competitive communalism, of appeasement and of casteism. The politics of pitting caste against caste, community against community and class against tags has torn asunder our social fabric."

Mr Advani, while reaffirming the BJP's commitment to facilitate construction of the Ram temple at Ayodhya, sought to make it clear Once again that Mathura and Kashi are not on his party's agenda. He, as in the past, declined to entertain supplementaries whether these two shrines would come to figure on the BJP's agenda at a future date. As for the Ram temple, the manifesto says its construction at the Janmasthan "will be a tribute to Bharat Mata."

Statehood Issue

While dealing with various constitutional reforms contemplated by the party the manifesto promises to carve out Uttaranchal, Vananchal, Vidarbha and Chattisgarh and give them full statehood. Delhi will also get full Statehood. "We will further consider setting up a commission to examine the formation of smaller States." In Jammu and Kashmir, the manifesto talks of separate regional development councils for Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

The party has also promised to implement the main recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission such as restoring the balance of resources in favour of the States and ending the misuse of Article 356 to dismiss State Governments. "We will explore the possibility of making it mandatory for the Union Government to seek Parliament's approval by two-thirds majority for dismissal of State Governments."

The manifesto also talks of thorough-going electoral, judicial and administrative reforms. While on administrative reforms, the document talks of identifying areas from which the Government must withdraw so that the respective departments could be wound up in a phased manner. It speaks of plans to set up a national judicial commission and to appoint special judges to clear the huge arrears at all levels of the judiciary.

Economic Policies

The BJP has sought to highlight its plans to promote economic growth and employment through the 'Swadeshi' model. It hits out at the Narasimha Rao Government for "accepting the IMF conditionalities" to launch its programme of deregulation of industry, trade and exchange rate policies, as also a radically different approach to foreign investment.

Asserting that all the earlier structures and institutions of licence quota-permit raj remain intact even after five years of "proclaimed deregulation", the BJP manifesto says: "In totality, this Government will leave an economy more fragile and shattered than what it inherited in 1991. The challenges thus, to us in our bid at governance, are formidable.

The BJP, says the document, believes that while market-oriented policies may ensure growth, they cannot ensure redistributive equity and justice. As such, the State continues to have a role to play. The poor and the deprived would have to be helped by the State to cross the poverty line and to attain a sustainable minimum quality of life.

As for the BJP's approach to the foreign investment issue, the manifesto says: "The BJP welcomes foreign investment because we hold that it supplies knowledge, technology and know how and sharpens the quality and competitive edge of our economy. We will, however, strive to maximise our dependence on foreign savings. We will prioritise foreign investment in sectors that will promote exports in preference of sectors that will cater solely or exclusively to the domestic market party does not favour the entry of multinational corporations (MNCs) in consumer non-durables.

The manifesto, however, does not say if it proposes to do anything vis-a-vis the MNCs who are already doing business in the country in these items. All that the document says on the subject is: "As for MNCs in consumer non-durables, we do not consider them as areas of priority."

The BJP's own industrial policy, it says, will be guided by the principles of "economic sovereignty, modernisation and decentralisation". "The party regards the preservation of the nation's economic interests as a component of our external economic relations. Globalisation, to us is not a synonym for the obliteration of national economic interests." At the same time, the manifesto also talks of BJP's commitment to modernise the economy.

On the foreign policy front, the BJP's document talks of the challenges and opportunities from a post-Cold War world and says: "The BJP shall conduct diplomacy in tune with India's position as a strong power and a major player in the world arena." The party says it will seek to promote Asian solidarity and develop South Asian regional cooperation. It also talks of a fresh look on the plea of dual citizenship by non-resident Indians (NRIs).

On the security scenario, the BJP has spoken of a tough law to deal with internal terrorism, while on the external plane the party will opt for the nuclear deterrent. It will also seek to increase defence expenditure "to realistic levels".

India: Article Urges 'Freedom' for Kashmir

BK0804123796 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 5 Apr 96 p 18

[Article by Sarmila Bose: "Let Your Kashmiris Free"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sometimes a storm of events merely serves to highlight the inexorable consistency of a fundamental problem. Parliamentary elections are announced in Jammu and Kashmir, a mysterious shootout occurs at the Hazratbal shrine and a prominent Kashmiri human rights activist is tortured and murdered in Srinagar to a hail of public protest. But the fundamental problem in Kashmir looms as steadfastly as ever — what Kashmir needs and Kashmir lacks is freedom.

It is a cliche to say that most problems are complex, especially those as entrenched and contentious as Kashmir. It is true the people of Jammu, Ladakh and the Kashmir valley may have different visions of what they wish for themselves. It is true that there are multiple groups operating in Kashmir, sometimes fighting one another as ferociously as they fight the Indian state.

India and Pakistan have long been locked in their own rhetoric over Kashmir that is rooted in their identity insecurities and has a political life of its own. Yet for all its complexities, the Kashmir issue also has some beguiling simplicities that stare one in the face. To endlessly chant the list of complexities and pitfalls is to miss the fundamental simplicities which contain the pointers towards what might resolve the conflict.

Most fundamental is the simple fact that the Kashmir problem exists because the people of that territory have long been denied the freedom to decide their own political destiny. Another simplicity is that the entity most responsible for the creation and sustenance of the Kashmir problem is the government of India. It follows that regardless of Pakistan, the key to resolving the problem also lies primarily with India.

However, the actual resolution of the conflict can only come through international participation, in the form of pressure, supervision and peacekeeping. Finally, there is no long term solution without a popular referendum that in dudes [as published] the option of independence for all or part of the territory.

The time has come for those who are not accredited "experts" on the Kashmir issue to take a far more active interest in this conflict than has been done so far.

The reason is also simple. The Kashmir conflict is the defining political and moral issue of these times in this region. It is not India's only problem, but without resolving it the country can have no peace, security or prosperity of any lasting value in south Asia, nor any pride in the strength of Indian civilisation.

For many who live far away from the conflict and have plenty of their own problems to worry about, it may seem easier to let Kashmir grind in the background or to believe the official assurances about what is going on there and what is being done about it. But this is an illusion.

The Kashmir conflict not only inflicts unspeakable suffering on all its people, it affects the well-being of the rest of India. It weakens India's constitutional structure, pollutes the political system, drains the economy, misplaces security forces, destabilises regional and international relations, and destroys India's moral position in the world community. India can and should honesty recognise who are responsible for this state of affairs and who are in a position to change its course for the better.

In spite of the long-standing dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and an open revolt in Indian continued Kashmir for the last several years, there is a great deal of ignorance about the history of this conflict among the general population. While most people have been preoccupied with their own problems, the information void has been filled largely by relentless official propaganda about Kashmir, structured around nationalistic and jingoistic rhetoric between India and Pakistan. Thus, in spite of some notable exceptions among Indian intellectuals and journalists, the Kashmir issue has typically been reduced to a crude "patriotism" test.

Yet even a cursory reading of the history of Kashmir reveals that the accession of this princely state to newly independent India and the experience of its Indian controlled part as one of India's states are riddled with dishonourable and unconstitutional behaviour on the part of the government of India. In spite of the partisanship aroused by the Kashmir issue, there seems little disagreement over the basic facts.

Like most contentious problems around the world, the British lurk behind the Kashmir dispute. They sold the Kashmir valley to the Dogra chief, Gulab Singh, as a reward for his dubious assistance against the Sikhs, creating the patchwork territory of Jammu and Kashmir. To make matters worse, the Dogras turned out to be unmitigated disasters as rulers. Then in 1947, the British essentially abandoned the myriad princely states which theoretically had the option of independence. However, it is not possible to blame the British for the Kashmir problem today. Independent India had a real chance to secure peace and prosperity in Kashmir and, to put it bluntly, blew it totally.

Predominantly Muslim Kashmir's accession to India by its waffling Hindu king in 1947 was conditional upon a popular plebiscite to ratify it. This was guaranteed by the government of India and personally by the prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, clearly and repeatedly, in statements to the press, to Parliament and to international bodies. It is a fact that this plebiscite was never held. India's claim to Kashmir is thus founded on deceit.

Even so, if Kashmiris had found political freedom within the secular state of India, they may well have been satisfied. But that was not to be. New Delhi would not allow Kashmir to be ruled by the leaders and governments of the people's choice. The hugely popular Sheikh Abdullah was deposed in the Fifties and jailed Farooq Abdullah was similarly pushed out in 1984 in spite of having won an enormous mandate. Both father and son found that the only way they would be allowed to rule in Kashmir would be to cut a deal with Delhi on its own terms, but such subservience cost them the respect of Kashmir. The last election in 1987 was blatantly rigged.

Deprived of the freedom to choose who would govern them and how, whether inside or outside India, the Kashmiris finally rose in revolt in 1990. New Delhi has tried ever since to militarily crush the people whose political voice it repeatedly stifled. Inevitably, the exercise of military might has solved none of the political problems, but unleashed a reign of repression, detention, torture and killings that has made a travesty of the political and human values India is supposed to stand for and shamed India across the world.

The talk of elections in Kashmir therefore has a hollow ring. Kashmir is a blazing demonstration that the ritual of elections does not constitute true democracy and the paraphernalia of statehood do not amount to true freedom. Repeating "Kashmir is an integral part of India" ad nauseum is an irrelevance in this context. So is the plaintive claim that the Kashmir dispute is a "bilateral" matter between India and Pakistan.

The reality is that India raised the Kashmir issue in the United Nations in 1947 and it has remained an international issue ever since. Nor is there any prospect of the conflict being resolved without mediation by other countries, which would also have to oversee a transitional period in Kashmir in the event of a phased solution. And there is no solution to the Kashmir conflict without the third party to the dispute — the Kashmiris — in some representational form.

Finally, there is no getting away from that elusive plebiscite, updated to reflect current realities. As all available accounts attest to a substantial demand for political independence in the Kashmir valley, the plebiscite must include that option along with a well considered constitutional arrangement within the state of India. It is up to India to offer Kashmiris a convincing package of self rule and security. But true freedom requires the inclusion of all options and the readiness to accept the verdict of the people, whatever that may be.

Perhaps the worst part of the Kashmir conflict is that so much of the suffering and the political, economic and moral cost to the whole of India is unavoidable. While a long term solution would involve Pakistan, there is much that India can do in its part of Kashmir on its own. Several "expert" constitutional arrangements are available as the basis for dialogue.

The political exit of any part of Kashmir will not cause the rest of India to tap apart. Rather its forcible inclusion insults India's professed political values, obstructs the economic prosperity of the whole region and dig graces Indians in terms of morality, humanity and civilisation. India should own up to its shameful record in Kashmir and start to set things right. It is the only way forward and it is the only decent thing to do.

Iran

Iran: 'Turkish Espionage Ring,' Mostly 'Diplomats,' Broken Up

LD0904173696 Tehran IRNA in English 1716 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tabriz (East Azarbaijan), April 9, IRNA — Intelligence director general of East Azarbaijan Province announced on Tuesday [9 April] that a Turkish espionage ring, mostly made up of Turkish diplomats in Iran, was busted.

Addressing a press conference, the intelligence officer said confessions of those arrested and the documents discovered from the spy den indicate that the spies garnered information and put it at the disposal of the Turkish intelligence agency.

He added that members of the ring conspired against the Islamic Republic of Iran and intended to interfere in Iran's internal affairs. They were trying to form clandestine groups in an effort to carry out unlawful operations and acts of sabotage against the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to the intelligence official, the confessions of the members of the espionage ring indicate that a number of Turkish intelligence officers who were planted under the guise of diplomats at the Turkish Embassy in Tehran and its consulates in Tabriz and Orumiyeh, spearheaded these covert activities.

The intelligence director general of East Azarbaijan provided the reporters with the specifications of four members linked to the espionage ring as follows:

Ardal Kuzoghlu, the Turkish political attache at the Consulate in Orumiyeh: Khalil Olomoz, political attache at the Turkish Embassy in Tehran: Ali Husayn Hakan Kadakal, political attache at the Orumiyeh Consulate: and Qadri Jan, political attache at the Consulate in Tabriz.

He said further information on these espionage ring will be put at the disposal of the media and the public opinion in coming days.

Iran: Better Relations Sought Between Iran, Turkey

LD0904152396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. Ali Tuygan, the deputy foreign minister of Turkey, who is in Tehran, on Monday 8th April met with the Iranian foreign minister. In this meeting, Dr Velayati, referring to the news printed by the mass media, (?based) on the signing of a new military agreement between the Quds [Jerusalem]-occupying regime and Turkey to grant base facilities, on behalf of Turkey, to the Quds-occupying regime's airforce, called for an explanation.

Dr. Velayati, describing the Quds-occupying regime as the worst enemy of the world of Islam, which has had many wars against the world of Islam — and considering that Turkey is a big country of the world of Islam — emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran follows up accurately and with special attention news related to military cooperation between the Quds-occupying regime and Turkey.

Undoubtedly, the military agreement between Turkey and the Zionist regime is in contradiction with the objectives and interests of cooperation between the regional countries, and this new agreement is considered as a threat to the establishment of security in the region.

Considering that, up till now, no official report nor explanation on the new agreement between Turkey and the Zionist regime has been printed, the explanations of Turkish officials on this issue can prevent any disruption in the ties between this country and the regional countries.

Although the Turkish Foreign Ministry has denied part of the issues brought up, which had been referred to by the mass media, certainly more explanations, by Turkish officials in this field, will lead to the regional countries to take stances towards the Turkish Government [as heard].

On the other hand, the Turkish Foreign Ministry has announced that this country's delegation sent to Iran will also hold dialogues on terrorism and the (?Cagirici) issue. A great number of mass media of Turkey, with a wave of negative propaganda against Iran, have claimed that Iran has cooperated with a group of Irfan Cagirici — this is while the Islamic Republic of Iran has denied any participation in terrorist incidents in Turkey.

In general, Tehran's ties have always been based on mutual respect and non-intervention in the affairs of other countries. The enemies of Iran and Turkey, in order to create division between the people and governments of these two countries, with all kinds of plots intend to disrupt the ties between Tehran and Ankara.

Undoubtedly, the trip of the Turkish delegation to Tehran and their talks with Iranian officials on important bilateral and regional issues will clarify many of the obscure points for both parts [as heard].

Iran: Turkish-Iranian Political Consultations Begin in Tehran

TA0904154896 Ankara ANATOLIA in English 1510 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 9 (A.A.) — Political consultation talks between Turkey and Iran started here on Tuesday [9 April].

A delegation, headed by Foreign Ministry deputy under secretary Ali Tuygan, represents Turkey during the meetings and it was learned that the talks were held in a positive atmosphere.

Bilateral relations were taken up as well as regional problems during the meeting which will also continue on Wednesday.

Iran's reactions against a military accord signed between Turkey and Israel and allegations that Tehran was behind the killings of prominent secularists in Turkey are expected to be taken up during the meetings.

Iran: Vice President Habibi, Turkish Official Discuss Cooperation

LD0904180596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] First Vice President Hasan Habibi has met with the Turkish deputy foreign minister. He stressed: The presence of foreigners, particularly the enemies of the world of Islam, in the region would be totally unacceptable to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Stressing the importance of cooperation between regional countries to preserve the stability of the Middle East, he said: If the reports are true of the signing of a new agreement between the regime occupying Jerusalem and Turkey, the feelings of the Islamic peoples would be hurt and Ankara would be criticized by the world of Islam. [passage omitted]

At the meeting, Deputy Turkish Foreign Minister 'Ali Tuygan conveyed the warm greetings of Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz to our country's first vice president. He said: Ankara attaches a great deal of importance to the expansion of ties with Iran, and would not allow any country to undermine its friendly and brotherly ties with Iran.

Iran: Daily Rejects Israeli Claim Iran Involved in Terrorism

LD0904064796 Tehran IRNA in English 0619 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 9, IRNA — It has now become routine for Israel to divert public attention from internal crises using the Islamic Republic of Iran, an English morning daily noted Tuesday [9 April].

Referring to the Zionist regime's announcement on Sunday of the arrest of a Palestinian who supposedly claimed to have been trained in Iran to carry out anti-Israeli attacks, as well as Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' claim that an Iranian ship loaded with explosives was intercepted by Belgian authorities, 'IRAN NEWS' observed that Israeli authorities have resorted to anti-Iran propaganda to fill the void of evidence.

While stressing that the Islamic Republic will never recognize the usurpation of Palestinian lands and that Iran will continue to oppose Israeli suppression of the Palestinians, nevertheless, it emphasized that Tehran's "opposition to the Zionist regime has never crossed the diplomatic channel".

"And this is the reason why both Israel, and its guardian, the U.S., could produce no evidence to support their claim that Iran is involved in terrorist activities," it stated.

It looks like Israel, right or wrong, is trying to divert its people's attention from domestic problems and the troubled peace process, to issues that in fact do not exist at all, continued the article.

Concluding with a reminder, it said, "the Americans and the Zionists should remember that they may deceive some of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time."

Iran: Israeli Prime Minister Peres' Comments Called Attempt To 'Defame' Iran

LD1004111696 Tehran IRNA in English 1100 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 10, IRNA — Iran's Embassy in Brussels rejected as baseless the recent allegations made by the prime minister of the Zionist regime, Shim'on Peres.

Peres on Sunday [7 April] claimed that a ship loaded with sophisticated arms and explosives had been discovered in the port of Antwerp in Belgium over the past two weeks.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Iranian Embasssy said the recent political move of the Zionist regime was an attempt to defame Iran.

The statement said that the unfounded comments of Peres are contrary to the explicit viewpoints of the Belgian gendarmerie which were carried by the country's press and to the remarks of the Belgian national judge that the charges were immature.

In line with Iran's policy of condemning terrorism in all its forms, Iranian embassies in Belgium and Germany, in direct contacts with officials of the two countries, have voiced readiness of the Iranian judiciary to jointly cooperate with the two countries to clarify the issue.

The embassy expressed the hope that the baselessness of such allegations which are made with a view to covering up domestic problems by levelling charges against others would be proven through cooperation of Belgian and German officials.

Iran: Daily Criticizes Turkish-Israeli Accord

LD0704055396 Tehran IRNA in English
0524 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 7, IRNA — An English morning daily Sunday lambasted a military cooperation agreement between Ankara and Tel Aviv allowing the Zionist air force to train in the skies of Turkey.

Saying that this would provide the opportunity to the Israelis to have access to a considerable chunk of Muslim territory, the 'TEHRAN TIMES' noted, "this is tantamount to another Zionist enchroachment (and) in reality, it is another dimension of the expansionist policies of the Zionist regime."

Turkey cannot neglect the sentiments of its Muslim masses who will protest against such policies, it warned, reminding Ankara that Bait-ul-Moqaddas [as received] is still under Israeli occupation.

Referring to the dangers of having Israel practically in the doorstep of the Muslim world, the article stressed, "the Zionist regime will definitiely use Turkish airspace to carry spying- surveillance flights...to collect information on Turkey's neighboring countries."

The daily castigated Ankara politicians for succumbing to Israeli and U.S. intimidation and called on Iranian officials to express Tehran's strong concern over the issue as well as adopt suitable measures to thwart the threat posed to regional security.

Iran: Velayati Voices Concern at Turkey's Links With Israel

LD0904085096 Tehran IRNA in Persian
0658 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, 9 Apr (IRNA) — At a meeting with Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Tuygan, Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati described the Zionist regime as the worst enemy of the world of Islam and asked for an explanation from Ankara regarding military cooperation between Turkey and the Zionist regime.

At this meeting, which took place in Tehran on Monday [8 April] night, Velayati referred to the news reported by the world's mass media suggesting that the Jerusalem-occupying regime and Turkey have signed a new military agreement granting Turkish airspace facilities to the Air Force of the Jerusalem-occupying regime, and said: Iran is following the news about cooperation between the Jerusalem-occupying regime and Turkey with particular interest and attention.

He added: The Turkish Defense Ministry has denied parts of the published reports. Nevertheless, the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to express its grave anxiety about the possible granting of any kind of facilities to the Jerusalem-occupying regime, considering this to be contrary to the vital interests of the world of Islam and the region.

The Turkish deputy foreign minister spoke of the importance of the ties between Iran and Turkey, and said: Turkey never aims to create tension or disturbances with any country in the region, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Tuygan spoke of the shared political, economic, and cultural features of the two countries and strongly denied reports that Turkey has granted airspace facilities and air bases to Israel, and he described it as an exaggeration by the world's mass media.

Iran: Commentary on Israel, Palestinian Self-Rule Government

LD0704134096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
0955 GMT 7 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] With the nearing of the final talks between the Palestinians and the Zionist regime, Israel, using the elimination of articles in the Palestine

National Charter on destruction of Israel as a pretext, has embarked on a new confrontation which — notwithstanding the campaigns for that regime's future elections — indicates that regime's posturing over the so-called final negotiations for determining the fate of the occupied territories. Some time ago, the Zionist regime's foreign minister, Ehud Baraq, at a gathering of his party's supporters, while stressing the need to preserve and annex the Jewish inhabited townships and settlements in the occupied territories and the Jordan Valley, cried out: We will have the last word because we are stronger. That is when the Zionists are not prepared to show any flexibility with regard to issues such as Jerusalem and the Jewish settlements which constitute a significant part of the occupied territories. Moreover, the Israeli premier, Shim'on Peres, ties any agreement with the self-rule government to a referendum among the Jews.

Those statements are made under circumstances where that regime's actual measures against the Palestinians are intensifying daily and Israel exploits moves, such as sealing of the occupied lands and increasing suppression of Palestinian Muslims, as a lever to get further concessions from the self-rule government. The statements and actions by the Zionists — which indicate their main and final strategy in ignoring the spirit of the Oslo Agreement — have faced personalities such as Hanan 'Ashrawi, known for her support for the compromise process and one of its founders, with the reality that the Zionist regime's pursuit of peace is merely a cover for the realization of its new objectives. In future negotiations the Zionists will do their utmost to trample on their own undertakings.

Under such circumstances, it seems that the PLO and Palestinian personalities who support the compromise intend to react in the face of the existing realities and the people's strong objections and somewhat review their reactive policies. For instance the PLO, on the one hand, has begun moves to establish contact with its opponents and coordinate with them to a certain extent. On the other hand, in order to confront the Zionists' pressure levers and while threatening that the self-rule government will carry out a referendum of its own if a referendum is carried out to confirm any possible agreements between PLO and Tel Aviv, the PLO has decided to wrench the threatening economic lever from the Zionist regime by creating enthusiasm in the occupied territories. This objective — just like PLO's earlier ones — seems ambitious and dream-like. Nevertheless, the confrontation between the Zionists and the self- rule government and the deep differences which have led to their confrontation raise this question: Will the compromise process get anywhere in its final stage, or with the passage of time will Yasir 'Arafat as well realize that a Palestinian government was no more than a mirage?

Iran: 'Bright' Future Seen for Ties to South Africa

LD1004084796 Tehran IRNA in English
0816 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 10, IRNA — The future of Iran-South African relations is bright and the formation of a joint commission will further pave the way for diverse bilateral relations, the morning English daily 'IRAN NEWS' wrote in its editorial Wednesday [10 April].

Welcoming the formal opening of the South African Embassy in Iran, the daily noted in its editorial that Tehran was the first government to resume diplomatic relations with Pretoria following the fall of the racist apartheid regime in 1994.

It recalled that prior to the establishment of the Islamic republic, "the shah's regime in Tehran and the whites-only rulers in Pretoria were involved in wide-scale eco-trade relations," adding that South Africa as well as Israel were major importers of Iranian crude.

However, the guidelines issued by the father of the revolution, Imam Khomeyni, shaped Iranian foreign policy to be against oppression and exploitation wherever it is and in whatever form, leading to the severance of these lucrative trade ties.

The article stressed on the significance of the current official visit to Iran of South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo, especially in the light of U.S. pressure on the government of President Nelson Mandela.

It highlighted the fact, "the Mandela government said 'no' to President Bill Clinton's Administration, and Iran now supplies 90 percent of South Africa's oil."

Iran: South Africa, Iran Concerned About Foreign Interference

MB1004094096 Johannesburg SABC 2 Television Network in English 0500 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] South Africa and Iran are concerned about foreign powers interfering in relations between the two countries. Foreign Minister, Alfred Nzo, and his Iranian counterpart 'Ali Akbar Velayati, discussed the matter during Nzo's two day visit to Iran. Earlier the United States expressed concern over the oil storage deal between South Africa and Iran.

Meanwhile, Deputy President, F.W. de Klerk, announced that South Africa might sell arms to Gulf Arab states. He ensured that the weapons will not be used in civil wars. Mr. de Klerk recalled South Africa's arms deal with Oman two years, and said talks could be held with Saudi Arabia.

Iran: South African Minister Ends Visit; Joint Communique Issued

LD1004091796 Tehran IRNA in English 0859 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 10, IRNA — Iran and South Africa called for active participation of Third World countries at international conventions especially the United Nations to change its structure.

The call was made in a joint communique issued at the end of the 3-day official visit to Tehran of South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alfred Nzo.

The joint communique welcomed eradication of racist policies and establishment of democracy in South Africa and expressed hope that Pretoria makes further economic progress.

It also praised the internal and international achievements of the Islamic republic.

Referring to the friendly ties between Iran and South Africa, the two sides expressed willingness to bolster relations in various fields.

Nzo was seen off at Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport by Minister of Mines and Metals Mohammad Hoseyn Mahluji. Foreign Minister Velayati is currently in Sarajevo, Bosnia, to attend the 2-day meeting of the contact group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Iran: Goal of U.S. Military Maneuvers in Persian Gulf Assessed

LD0604124596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 6 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On Friday April 5, Kuwaiti and American servicemen once again started their joint military maneuvers on the Kuwaiti soil. The maneuvers, which are the second round of joint maneuvers of the two countries this year, will continue till May 25. U.S. Defense Secretary spokesman said: The aim of the maneuvers is to stress this country's steadfastness over Persian Gulf security and stability, and the coordination between U.S. and Kuwaiti military forces. This comes at a time when only three weeks have passed since U.S.-Qatar maneuvers and while maneuvers between the U.S. and the United Arab Emirates are still continuing.

The White House has once again described the aim of such maneuvers: the creation of coordination between forces in the Persian Gulf from the fifth warship [as heard] and military men of regional countries. However, political observers believe Washington pursues a far more important goal through maneuvers with countries in southern Persian Gulf. Such maneuvers seem to be mostly aimed at justifying U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf and consolidating U.S. presence in the area.

Elsewhere, Washington intends to reassure PGCC [Persian Gulf Cooperation Council] members through such maneuvers that it will safeguard their security. In the same line, the White House, signing a defense pact with most of the shaykhdoms, is making them more and more dependent on the U.S. in terms of security matters. It, however, seems governments in the south of the Persian Gulf are doubtful of whether the U.S. will fulfill its promises in critical moments or will only take its own interests into account, as it has done in the past. Further, U.S. interests conformed with those of the Kuwaiti leaders during the occupation of Kuwait and the oil in 1990 and 1991. It is not clear whether there will always be such an accord between the goals pursued by both parties involved. Hence, Kuwaiti officials, who have selected Americans as defenders of their territorial integrity, cannot trust them to a great extent, especially when America's presence in the Persian Gulf region is aimed at exercising control over the oil in the region in order to exert pressure on its European and Asian rivals.

Elsewhere, despite repeated guarantees by Washington over establishing security in the Persian Gulf countries, the U.S. Government still insists on selling great quantities of sophisticated weapons to the region. Hence, America's performance in the Persian Gulf is an indication of the divisive affects of alien presence in the area, while countries in the rim of the Persian Gulf are able to establish more lasting security without high expenditure in the region themselves.

Iran: West, U.S. Intend To Control Capital Investment in Bosnia

LD0904151096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The foreign ministerial session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, OIC, contact group and some OIC members will be held on April 9th and 10th in Sarajevo. The talks are aimed at strengthening the defense capability of Bosnia, to balance the military might and help reconstruction of Bosnia.

Political analysts believe the session is of high significance since it is to be held for the first time in Sarajevo. Participation of Muslim states in a session in Sarajevo is indicative of the support that the world of Islam is willing to offer Bosnia and will definitely leave a strong positive effect. Furthermore the session will be held a few days prior to the reconstruction conference in Brussels on April 12th and 13th. Now, when the possibility of a more intensive rivalry between Russia and the West in Bosnia, through economic aid, is becoming stronger, the Sarajevo session is assessed as highly important. Specially when the Western states are pressurizing Bosnia to decrease of level of relations with the Islamic states.

Political experts, at the same time, believe that the boosting of [the] defense capability of Bosnia can be instrumental in implementing the Dayton and agreement, helping the establishment of peace in that country. [passage omitted].

Some political analysts believe that although it seems that the Sarajevo government has bowed to the pressure of the West, it emphasizes the maintenance of the religious aspect of the government. Also, Hasan Muratovic, the Bosnian prime minister, has announced that Bosnia expects Islamic countries to give unconditionally to this country. Suddenly the Western countries are not satisfied about the Islamic countries giving money and capital to the Bosnian Government. But under no condition will the West allow the Islamic countries to expand their role in Bosnia via military and economic channels.

Therefore the West, especially the United States, intend to take control of the circulation of the investment of capital in Bosnia.

At any rate, what is important is that, up to now, the Islamic countries have behaved in a non-coordinated manner towards the Bosnian issue. Therefore, now they can only defend the Sarajevo government against the Western countries, by implementing approved plans by the Islamic Contact Group.

Iran: Kharrazi Addresses UN Security Council on Afghanistan

LD1004110696 Tehran IRNA in English
0742 GMT 10 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, New York, April 10, IRNA — The ambassador and permanent representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the U.N., Kamal Kharrazi, expressing concern over the regrettable condition of Afghanistan, once again announced Iran's readiness to play active role in peace process in that war-torn country.

Kharrazi, addressing a special session of the U.N. Security Council on the situation of Afghanistan, Tuesday [9 April] afternoon, said that for a long time, the question of Afghanistan has been on the agenda of different meetings of the U.N. and many resolutions have been adopted. However, the conflict in Afghanistan and the suffering of the Afghan people continue.

"We hope that today's meeting can help create an atmosphere conducive for more involvement of the international community in Afghanistan both in terms of finding a peaceful solution to the conflict as well as responding to humanitarian needs of Afghan people who have been suffering for the last 17 years and are in dire need of peace, stability and development," he added.

Announcing Iran's support for the U.N.'s special mission to Afghanistan, headed by Ambassador Mahmud Mestiri, Kharrazi said that close coordination and cooperation among the U.N., Organization of the Islamic Conference and the neighboring countries is the best means in achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's territorial integrity, sovereignty and national unity have to be safeguarded and no foreign involvement has to be imposed on Afghans as it is against their historical background, Kharrazi stressed.

The Iranian ambassador to the U.N., referring to Iran's support and respect for the right of Afghans in choosing their future, said, "Our policy has been focused on maintaining contact with the government and all Afghan groups and using every opportunity to promote peace."

As in the past, Kharrazi said, the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to cooperate with its neighboring states to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan. "Having long border with Afghanistan and sharing language and religious commonalities with the people of Afghanistan, Iran has been gravely concerned about the situation in that country."

He added, "Witnessing closely the suffering of a neighboring country for a long period of time, we cannot be indifferent to the fate of Muslim people of Afghanistan and, therefore, we have taken different measures in order to alleviate the suffering of the people of that country."

Referring to the humanitarian assistance rendered by the Islamic Republic of Iran to Afghanistan, Kharrazi said, "We have hosted more than 2.5 million Afghan refugees whom we have protected with a very high standard of treatment, despite the fact that international assistance rendered to cover the expenses has not been proportionate with the size and magnitude of the problem. We hope that all Afghan refugees can return to their homeland voluntarily as soon as possible. Needless to say, international cooperation and assistance to facilitate this process is vital."

More on Iranian assistance he added, "My country has done its best, through different means, to help Afghan people. Building hospitals and medical centers to treat patients free of charge, offering educational programs for Afghan students, training Afghan medical groups, implementing a continuous plan of child vaccination, rendering necessary facilities to orphanages, and providing food and non-food assistance are but some of our ongoing activities aimed at ameliorating the suffering and hardships of Afghan people."

On political field, Kharrazi said, Iran has spared no effort in helping the Afghan parties to set aside their differences for the sake of all Afghans, peace and stability in the region. "We have repeatedly urged them to agree on a durable cease-fire and seek a negotiated peaceful solution acceptable to all," he concluded.

Iran: Failure of Vienna Talks on Global Arms Exports Viewed

LD0604131396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 6 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to press report, the secret talks of the Wassenaar Committee to control global arms exports, which was held on Wednesday April 3, has failed. Based on statements by sources close to the Vienna-held negotiations, the reason for the talks failure has been the rising of disputes between Russia and the U.S. over the disclosure of sensitive information by Russia on world arms exports. Meanwhile, some Western political and press circles are trying to spread the news that the reason for the talks failure has been the opposition by Russia against making laws to limit export of arms to countries such as Iran, Libya, and North Korea.

The fact of the matter is, however, that Moscow is against asking for permission from Washington in order to sell arms. On the other hand, based on other news, Russia is refusing to disclose its secret military information, which is badly seeked by Washington. Therefore, the reason given by Western news sources for the failure of the talks cannot be true because the duty of the Wassenaar Committee is not related to the sale of nuclear equipment at all and is only linked to the control of classic weapons sales. Nevertheless, Western political corners are saying that Russia has not accepted to cooperate in the boycott of nuclear equipments exports to Iran, Libya, and North Korea.

Elsewhere, according to political experts, another reason for the failure of the Wassenaar Committee talks is that Russia makes a substantial part of its hard currency incomes from arms exports. So Moscow, which is in desperate need of more financial incomes and investments, has difficulty to adapt itself to the regulations on classic weapons sales control. In any case, the failure of the Wassenaar Committee talks on arms sales control demonstrated that it is a long way to go for Russia's cooperation with the Western military (?and) security affairs. This issue, though small, shows that Moscow has particular political objectives in announcing its readiness to cooperate with NATO on international peace plans. These objectives are, of course, contrary to Western plans, especially those of Washington. In fact, this position by Moscow is an indication of serious existing disputes between Russia and the West in relation to the NATO expansion plan.

Iran: Commentary Views Motives Behind French Moves Toward Iraq

LD0904164796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1108 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] French President Jacques Chirac said on 8 April in Egypt, that it is now time for Iraq to once again join the international community while observing the UN resolutions in order to lift its international sanctions.

The statements of Mr. Jacques Chirac are in line with the Paris policy about Baghdad, based on the immediate lifting of the economic embargo of Iraq, since this country, before the start of the sanctions in 1990, was one of the trade partners and important purchasers of France's weapons.

On this basis, since two years ago, oil and non-oil French companies, in order to sign agreements with the Iraqi Government — which will be possible after the lifting of the sanctions — have visited that country. In exchange, Baghdad too — who is aware that the expansion of trade ties with Paris will further encourage the efforts of that country's officials to end its economic embargo — has welcomed this issue. [passage omitted]

Therefore, the insistence on the lifting of Iraq's embargo on the part of France, as well as Russia, who both have similar interests in Iraq, is comprehensible. It is even said that Resolution 986, in which the selling of $1 billion of oil during the three months foreseen for the purchase of an amount of goods, has been ratified with the efforts of Moscow and Paris. [sentence as heard] [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, the lifting of sanctions on Iraq is one of the disputed issues between France and the United States, since Washington still considers Baghdad as an unreliable government, and stresses the continuation of sanctions. On the other hand, Paris and Washington are rivals regarding the selling of weapons to countries south of the Persian Gulf. This is while these shaykhdoms are mainly opponents of the Iraqi regime. Therefore, French officials should act in a way in this region that they do not lose their arms sales agreements with the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, PGCC members, because of their relation with Baghdad. The French president, for this reason, announced in his speech that the reconstruction of Iraq should take place by creating trust between Baghdad and the PGCC member countries.

Regarding the Iraqi nation, he also said the world must not ignore their deplorable condition. Although this statement is well said regarding the deplorable condition of the Iraqi people, one cannot be sure whether the French president is really concerned over the deplorable situation of the Iraqis or is mostly taking into consideration the interest of French companies, which will be able to resume activities in that country with the lifting of the Iraqi arms embargo.

Iran: Leftists To Support 15 Candidates in Majles Elections

LD0604091896 Tehran IRNA in English
0709 GMT 6 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 6, IRNA — Leftist factions have declared support for 15 candidates in the second round of elections for the fifth Majles, in addition to the four hopefuls whom they previously backed in the March 8 elections, the daily 'IRAN NEWS' reported, quoting informed sources.

The daily further wrote that another source had confirmed that the leftists would be adding five more names in their list.

Meanwhile, "Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (jrm) [Militant Clergy Association] has crossed the name of Mohammad Asghari, the former head of Kayhan Institute, from its list for the April 19 elections," the paper disclosed.

Furthermore, "a source close to the JRM has refuted rumors that the right-wing faction will include presidential advisor Hassan Ghafuri-Fard and former Tehran University chancellor Gholamali Afruz," it wrote, adding that though the two candidates belong to the JRM, they preferred to run in the first round as independent candidates and would continue to do so in the second round.

Iran: Guardians Council Confirms Elections in 156 Constituencies

LD0604134096 Tehran IRNA in English
1321 GMT 6 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 6, IRNA — Head of the election monitoring headquarters Hasan Ganji said on Saturday [6 April] that the validity of Majlis elections in 156 out of 196 constituencies throughout the country has been confirmed by the Guardians Council.

Referring to 35 remaining constituencies still under verification by the council, he noted that elections in Esfahan, Malayer, Miandoab, Najafabad and Na'in have proved to be faulty and thus declared as null and void.

Ganji explained that the Guardians Council gives priority to investigation into the correctness of polls in those constituencies where the second round of voting for the 270 seat Majlis is to be held.

He added that the election campaign for the run-off polls could be carried out during a 8 day period ending 24 hours before the voting day on April 11 [date as received].

Iran: IRMO Calls For Participation in Coming Polls

LD0904084896 Tehran IRNA in English
0700 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran April 9, IRNA — A member of the Islamic Revolution's Mujaheddin Organization (IRMO) called on the people to vigorously take part in the second round of parliamentary elections scheduled on April 19.

The more ballots are cast, the more the candidates of other groups rather than rightists would benefit, Mohammd Salamati, a contender for the Fifth Majles predicted in an interview with 'IRAN NEWS', printed Tuesday.

He said based on the past experiences usually more electorates take part in the first round of the polls than in the run-off elections.

The daily further reported him as stating that the first round of voting reflected Iran's observance of the rights of the people and that the country abided by the principles of democracy.

The coalition of the followers of the Imam's line of thought, including the Islamic Revolution's Mujahedeen Organization, the Islamic Association of the Medical Society of Iran and the Islamic Associations of Teachers and University Professors, would be participating in the secound round of the polls, it wrote.

Quoting Salamati, it added that there was a possibility of the Students' Unity Consolidation Institute backing up the candidates supported by the coalition, while the Islamic Association of Engineers intended to independently root for some candidates of the G-6 [as received] and the leftists.

Regarding a group winning a majority in the next Majlis, Salamati told 'IRAN NEWS' that he believed the traditional rightists would not be able to gain this position in the 270-seat Majles.

"Even if they win all the votes, the number of representatives of the traditional rightists will be 85, a figure lower than one-third of the entire number of MPs," Salamati noted.

Thus, he remarked, the next parliament would have a balanced composition as all groups would be able to have seats in the Fifth Majles.

Iran: Council Annuls Constituency First-Round Election Result

LD0904125396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Guardian Council met today. At their meeting, the election results for the constituencies of Aligudarz, Kuhdasht, Semirom, Neyshabur, Khvaf and Roshdkhar (as received), and Gorgan were discussed and the correctness of the elections in the said constituencies were endorsed.

The electoral results for the constituency of Khomeyn were also discussed and the correctness of the election in the said constituency was not endorsed. As a result, the election in the electoral constituency of Khomeyn was annulled.

At the meeting, the election results for the constituency of Saveh were also discussed and debated. In accordance with the request of the executive boards and the supervisory council, after examination, five ballot boxes — with the numbers: 29, 30, 42, 43 and 46 — were annulled, and, after the invalidation of these ballot boxes, the correctness of the election was endorsed. As a result, Mr. Mohammad Nobovati was elected to the Majles.

Iran: 50 Arrested for Election Offenses in First-Round Campaign

LD0904104596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] All the branches of Tehran's judicial complex will remain open on the day of the second round of the Majlis elections in order to deal with any possible electoral offenses.

Mr. Razini, the head of Tehran's Justice Department, announced this information at a gathering of reporters this morning and said: Four special branches of the court have already been based at the Tehran governor's office in order to deal rapidly with electoral offenses during the second round. [passage omitted]

The head of Tehran Province's Justice Department said the following regarding the cases that occurred during the first round of the elections for the fifth term of the Majlis: During the first round, about 200 election offenses files were established. About half of these have now been dealt with. The rest are under investigation and final verdicts will be issued on them in the near future.

He said: Fifty people have been arrested and detained in this connection — among which there are three electoral candidates and 10 officials from municipalities, including three mayors from the region — on charges of not adhering to the campaign law, using government resources, and distributing fake posters. They have been sentenced to imprisonment, flogging, and fines.

He said that the greatest number of electoral offenses during the first round concerned municipalities. [passage omitted]

Iran: Majles Candidates Interviewed on Velayat, Foreign Policy

LD0904211596 Tehran IRNA in English 1947 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 9, IRNA — In an interview with IRNA here today Majles candidates Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Reza Taqavi, Behzad Nabavi, Doctor Mostafa Mo'in Najafabadi and Mrs Maryam Behruzi offered their personal viewpoints regarding political, economic and religious topics. The following is excerpts from that interview.

Mrs Maryam Behruzi: The principles of membership at Iran's legislative assembly has its roots in the principles of Islam and the revolution. Those principles are founded on the 'Velayat-e Faqih'. The supremacy of the supreme religious jurisprudent is beyond the laws of the state. The religious legality of the political system in Iran is due to that principle. That is absolute authority rather than a form of leadership such as there are in China and the United States.

"Development and progress in every area must be along with social equity which is Islamic justice. Once we have faith in the principles, and as long as we advocate social equity conceived with economic development, we must then be especially concerned about our methods and practices.

"In our effort for doing so we shall be bounded by two things: first the ideological principles to which we adhere, second the state of the nation. We will have to make laws to safeguard public interests. We believe neither the masses nor the government should have the absolute rule, but that the absolute rule shall be the divine rule."

Behzad Nabavi: "To identify the priorities of the business of the Majles we must first define the tasks of the Majles. Secondly, we must indentify the problems of the nation to give them the order of priorities in the Majles.

"The priorities that the Majles will have to tackle will have to be identified on the basis of the most immediate problems of the nation. The proposition of the supreme religious authority having the absolute say in the nation, as is brought up by certain groups in the form of their campaign slogans is not really the issue today. The clerics and the ulema have brought up the topics in a manner suggesting the fact of its having been challenged by other groups.

"As members of the Islamic revolotion Mojahedin believe in the supremacy of the supreme religious authority as the most basic element in our platform. In the early days of the triumph of the Islamic revolution hypocritical factions in the country opposed the principle of the absolute supremacy of the Velayat-e Faqih, but even then we insisted on that principle as the pivotal thought of the revolution.

"Belief in the supremacy of the Velayat should be demonstrated in action.

"To protect national independence, freedoms, social justice and also to ensure development and progress are among the first priorities in the business of the Majles. To justify foreign investment in Iran in the second national development plan and to merge with the international market will in the long run adversely affect our national independence. To increase government subsidies is not to promote social equity. As long as our economic structure leans towards capitalism we shall not have social equity."

Hojjat ol-Eslam Taqavi: "Freedom is a basic and fundamental issue in which are also involved such other issues as pertian to economy, and development in their broad sense. The first paragraph of the second national development plan defines the ways and means for attaining social equity.

"Mention of the proposition of the supreme act of the supreme religious ruler is polemical argument. The society considers the Velayat as being its pivotal ideological principle, and insists on the imperative of following Imam Khomeyni's line and on obeyance to the leader which has also been dealt with in our canonical sources. The world is sensitive to that issue, but the proposition should not offer a weapon to some with which to discredit others."

Mrs Maryam Behruzi: "The arguement of the Velayat has been going on in various circles during the past few years, with some tending to separate his religious role from his political role. Our intention now being to win the votes of the people, we must tell them our position very sincerely and in a straight forward manner. In our judgment, foreign policy should be delineated on the basis of the concept of Velayat not according to center left or center right groups.

"This position of ours should be brought to the knowledge of the people. This does not mean to violate freedoms or to promote monopolysm. That is not freedom to witness the presence in these election of veteran liberals or novice liberals.

"As for the shape of our national foreign policy, we do not advocate liberalism. We do not approve of economic, cultural or social structures as advocated by center right or center left groups. But we tread a third course which is the Islamic course and we shall act according to that."

Doctor Mo'in: "The Majles will have three priorities in economic, cultural and social areas. In the area of economic programming such topics as improvement of our taxation system, adjustment of wealth in the society, and narrowing the gap between incomes as well as promoting the culture of personal economy and continuing national development should be in mind along with a commitment to safeguarding values, protecting the unprivileged masses, going on with our planning towards a national economy without oil, and monitoring with the use of the levers provided for in the Constitution...

"Cultural priorities will consist of such enterprises as improving out admninstrative and social structure, promoting professionalism, advancement towards a true Islam, encouraging and promoting responsibility of the indivisual citizen to moralize others, and attention to cultural institutions and science centers."

Hojjat ol-Eslam Taqavi: "Foreign investment in Iran can be made consistent with Note 22 of Paragraph e. of the law bill for the second national development plan. Within the bounds of that law foreign investors can invest in Iran, the government being obliged to present the lawbills thereon to the Majles.

"To amend a law would need lawbills for its amendment. You can oppose or challenge any thought or any thing by expressing opposite views, but once something has been established as law it must be respected so that it can be carried out smoothly."

Behzad Nabavi: "Foreign investment in Iran would prejudice cultural, social and political development.

Our indigenous resources will not be adequate for our development projects, but on the other hand we must find out exactly how much and what level of foreign investment we will need.

"(Addressing Taqavi): To challenge a program is not an offense, also your adversary can challege all laws and all government administrators. That is not disrespect to law, but rather respect to law and will be consistent with the laws of the state. In the fourth session of the Majles you did not respect the second national development plan. The discrepancy between the approved budget and the second national development plan is proof of that.

"(To Mrs Maryam Behruzi): If we do not realize then you can offer your own sample of an Islamic economy, and if you firmly believe that the second national development plan is a manisfestation of an Islamic economy, then say so."

Behzad Nabavi also found fault with the challenge to the group of 'promoters of national construction' by the struggling ulema of Tehran as a token of their monopolistic tendencies. Hojjat ol-Eslam Taqavi said the militant ulema of Tehran had only taken exception only to the purport of the first declaration of the stand of promoters of national construction. He said cabinet ministers should not have declared the names of a group of Majles candidates because the idea would prejudice the normal operation of the Majles and would give a certain orientation to the future decisions of the Majles with respect to the administration.

Iran: Election Said Crucial to Future

96LH0130A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 4 Feb 96 pp 28-29

[Article by Fahmi Huwaydi: "The Clash Between Shaykhs and Effendis Reaches Its Climax in Iran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The struggle between the effendis and the clerics in Iran has now reached its climax.

Because 1996 is a pivotal year in Iran, within a few weeks parliamentary elections will be held, and they will be followed by presidential elections. These will define Iran's position and attitude as it enters the 21st century. For that reason, the country is now witnessing a wide-ranging cultural and political dialogue on the future, marked by sharp vehemence. The two major parties to debate are the effendis and the clerics, and the main debate topic is: religion and politics.

Before getting into the topic, attention might be drawn to three things:

The first is the problem often faced when speaking of the situation in Iran, which is that the prevailing vocabulary falls short of precisely expressing the lay of the land and the divisions of that situation. When we speak of the struggle between the effendis and the sheykhs, for example, that does not mean there is a decisive alignment, with each side in wholly opposing camps because there are some effendis who support the shaykhs' point of view and some of the sheykhs who support the effendis' point of view. The majority of each side, however, is in this party or that. Both sides — and this is most significant —have Islamic bases in the sense that neither side is speaking from outside Islam, with the other speaking from within it, as is the case in some Arab countries. They both speak from within Islam, as the basis of the state's legitimacy; they differ in their understanding of the Islamic position and how to express it. Such talk is also applicable to the vocabulary of the right, the left, and the center. So while it is true that some of the vocabulary is used to describe some of the groups speaking from outside Islam, it is also true that the Islamic camp itself knows the difference, etc.

The second matter relates to the special nature of the Twelver Shi'ite vision, which is relatively different from the prevailing vision in the Sunni world; that is, jurisprudents in the Shi'ite experience have their established place in the religious marja'iat. Hence, we may say that there is in Iran a religious establishment with its own major influence and authority in the society. This institution has become more powerful and become an actual ruling authority, in light of the velayat-e faqih which Imam Khomeyni adopted, and upon which the Islamic system in Iran is based. It is considered one of the solid foundations in the country's constitution. It is well known that the velayat-e faqih is one of the interpretations [ijtihadat] in Shi'ite jurisprudence, while there are other interpretations in Qom and also in Lebanon which do not adopt the same idea.

This whole structure is different with the Sunnis, as they have no clergy; they only have religious scholars. The religious marja'iyat has no institution, jurisprudents do not have the powerful influence and authority that exists in Iran, and the idea of the velayat-e faqih does not exist in the literature of Sunni jurisprudence. We are not here to compare or prefer between vision and another; all we want is to take a look at what distinguishes one vision from the other.

The Enlightened Opened Fire First

It is not strange that the elections are the occasion for the calls for dialogue and which brought it to prominence, after it had been kept in closed circles over several years. Not a day goes by without the newspapers publishing a viewpoint on the topic of the relationship between the clergy and politics. This is partly because 600 periodicals are now published in Iran: dailies, weeklies, monthlies, and specialized publications. This is what has chiefly energized the issue, making it the major concern of the whole society.

It was the effendis, or intellectuals — who in Iran are known by the term "enlightened thinkers," — who opened fire on the clergy. Their basic motto is that the clergy has not succeeded in running the country over the 16 years since their taking power and that it is now necessary to separate the political and religious leaderships. This either means the election of elements from outside the theological seminary in Parliament or the election of a non—jurisprudent president, which could be the beginning of the diminishing of the role of the theological seminary in political life.

We are not exaggerating in saying that the development transpiring in the course of the Iranian revolution is moving slowly in that direction. The political and religious establishments came together in the first Islamic Revolution, which was led by Imam Khomeyni; he was the marja' and leader at that time. After his death, the marja'iyat was separated from the leadership, and the former went back to Qom where it had been before the revolution. Seyyid 'Ali Khamene'i became leader, losing the title of marja'. If the enlightened thinkers get what they want, the political situation might change in another direction; it could retain the marja'iyat (notice that there is a call for the selection of the guide by election, from among its most prominent title holders, Ayatollah Montazeri), but the president may come from outside the theological seminary (from among the effendis!).

There are two responses thus far to the calls of the non-"enlightened" intellectuals, led by Dr. Abdolkarim Soroush, the controversial philosophy professor in Tehran's intellectual circles; Dr. Mohammad Javad Larijani, National Security Council advisor and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Parliament; and Engineer Morteza Tehrani, editor-in-chief of the periodical RESALAT, and others.

The first response came calmly and was aimed at reviving and modernizing the theological seminary, in the form of Seyyid 'Ali Khamene'i's call for the development of religious education in the seminaries. In a visit the "leader of the revolution" made to Qom, he called for "the theological seminary to keep up with daily developments and the real needs of society." He said, "There are many errors being put about regarding philosophical and religious fundamentals, and it is up to the seminaries to evolve its religious, philosophical, and ethical studies, in order to respond to the defects and errors prevailing in the world. And to be up to date in the computer age."

This call was taken up by the Chief of the Judiciary Ayatollah Yazdi, who criticized the curricula in Qom and the prevailing mentality among the clergy in its theological seminary. He said, "It is up to them to understand that there is an Islamic government in Iran and to think in the logic of reality, not the logic of decades gone by."

The Sheykhs' Fears and Accusations

The second response was sharper and angrier. The call of the "enlightened" was attacked by Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani, the secretary general of the League of Militant Clergy, and president of the Imam Sateq University. He said in published press statements that the "enlightened" intellectuals had had a negative, damaging role in contemporary Iranian history. "For the Constitutional Renaissance was launched by the fatwa of the junior and and senior clergy, and before that, the Tobacco Revolution launched by the fatwa of al-Mirza Shirazi; and all these uprisings went off course thanks to the plots of the so-called 'enlightened.'" He added, "It happened again even when the oil was nationalized, thanks to the efforts of the senior clergy, led by Ayatollah Kashani, as after that they were under virtual house arrest thanks to the coup of the nationalists and dissenters who had infiltrated the clergy movement."

After recalling the evidence of history, Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani said, "I feel now that they are preparing the stage in Iran to do the same thing again. They say the clergy are not good enough to run the country and that meddling in executive affairs is contradictory to the sanctity of the clergy." He added, "I have always said that the others tried their luck for the last 2,500 years. Why should we not give the clergy a chance? I do not mean only the clergy, but to open the way to them and others to achieve development in this country. I do, however, warn of the danger of leaving the revolution to others. We saw enough in the early days of the revolution, enough scenes that endangered the country (meaning the government of Engineer Mahdi Bazargan which relied primarily on technocrats)."

Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani explained how Imam Khomeyni called, at the beginning of the revolution, for the clergy not to take positions of power directly but then subsequently stated clearly, "We erred when we handed the reins of power to those who opposed the entry of the clergy into politics, management issues, and government."

He concluded his remarks by saying that the clergy had to prove their worthiness to run the country's affairs because without attention to those interests it is not possible to exercise rule over people. On another front, Speaker of Parliament Sheykh Nateq Nuri criticized the position of the "effendis." He said in similar statements printed at the same time (mid-September, 1995), "The enemy is working craftily among the ranks of the people, to create errors and spread doubt, to weaken confidence in the velayat-e faqih." He added, "Some people, with the aim of striking at the principle of the velayat-e faqih, promote claims that religion is incapable of managing people's worldly affairs, and that its purpose was solely to hold them back. We know, however, that government consists of organizing people's political, social, cultural, and economic relations, and all those are worldly matters, but Islam has principles and values that must be taken into consideration."

Leading the country, getting into the subject to some degree or another, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who is seen as a liberal, told the weekly press, "The demands of the religious liberals (the enlightened) represent a danger similar to that of the religious hard-liners."

Leader of the Revolution Seyyid 'Ali Khamene'i was clearer and more decisive, saying, "The enemy seeks, through seeking to stir up doubts about the harmony between religion and politics, to get the clergy out of the political scene, so they can rule like Reza Khan, the Qajar kings, and foreign dominated rulers."

One clear landmark in the clash between the two sides was the article written by one of Qom's most famous clergyman, Ayatollah Azeri-Qomi. It was printed by the radical SALAM, which is critical of the government. The article ran under the headline, "The Knife of Jurisprudence." In it, he attacked one of the liberal clergy who were writing in the periodical ETTELA'AT, Sheykh Hojjati-Kermani, who said that Imam Khomeyni's view on the lawfulness of shedding Salman Rushdie's blood was just a fatwa, not a verdict the government and regime in Iran was obliged to carry out, especially as it was contrary to the law and to "international conventions to which Iran has committed itself to respect."

Sheykh Azeri-Qomi criticized a number of people prominent in the ranks of the enlightened for their support of Sheykh Kermani's position, and said, "While we see the criminal West knocking over our moral defenses, barricade after barricade, we see it today pitilessly attacking the final barricade, which is the velayat-e faqih, in order to vanquish the Islamic Republic and put an end to the mission of the great Khomeyni and the philosophy of the velayat-e faqih."

Pluralism Has Become a Pressing Demand

Those who follow the dialogue and the interactions on the Iranian political stage see the current argument between the effendis and the sheykhs as having benefited society to a large extent, regardless of the results that might be the consequence of that dialogue in the future. The certain fate is that it has helped to stir up the stagnant water of the country's political life and because of that to crystallize a number of new convictions among the Iranian public, the following of which have been noted by our colleague Professor Mohammad Sateq al-Hoseyni, a Tehran based expert in Iranian affairs:

— Political life in Iran will not stabilize unless the concept of political pluralism is applied with political parties. Even the idea of establishing political parties — as provided for in the Constitution-has become a pressing demand on the part of the masses. What is noteworthy is that figures of both trends—the effendis and the sheykhs — have voiced their support for the need to revive the party system. All the political forces have agreed that religious commitment alone is no longer sufficient justification for giving one person a holy right to assign jobs, or to undertake governmental and legislative tasks and responsibilities; and that scientific specialties and qualifications cannot be disregarded in managing the country's affairs.

— The religious forces and movements surrounding the ruling regime and tied to it are positive that continuing the governmental, popular, and legitimate course of the Islamic regime is inextricably tied to the bringing about of a comprehensive revolution in traditional jurisprudence, to move it into a post-revolutionary world of communications, information, and accelerated technological progress.

— The two major religious wings which have held power since the Islamic Revolution, the hard-liners and the conservatives—or what are euphemistically called the right and the left — have acknowledged that Iran is bigger than they are put together and that there is another view outside the circle of their thought. This is active and influential among Iranians and has the same elements of religious commitment that the two ruling wings have.

— All the political forces have understood that the time has probably come to assess the experience of 16 years, to benefit from the lessons and mistakes they have to offer and to pay attention to assessing public opinion and measure its indications, which are the true standard by which to judge success or acknowledge failure.

There is now a strong wind blowing across Iran, which could bring about a major change in political life, if the powers that be learn to discern its signs and put them to use for the good of expanding the scope of democracy and opening the doors to qualified people in order to do their duty in building the present and the future.

If, however, they are unable to read those signals, the undoubted loser will be Iran, both now and in the future.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Azerbaijani President Arrives on 3-Day State Visit

BK0904131096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan arrived in Islamabad this afternoon on a three-day state visit to Pakistan. At the airport he was received by the foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, and the minister for information and broadcasting, Mr. Khalid Ahmad Kharal, who is minister-in-waiting. A 21-gun salute boomed out to greet the distinguished guest.

President Heydar Aliyev will hold talks with President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and Prime Minister Ms. Benazir Bhutto on bilateral relations, regional and international issues, including the current state of affairs in occupied Kashmir.

Pakistan: Leghari, Azerbaijani President Discuss Bilateral Ties

BK0904161196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Azerbaijan president, Mr. Heydar Aliyev, called on President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari in Islamabad today and discussed with him a number of matters of bilateral interest. President Leghari told the president of Azerbaijan that a port is being developed at Gwadar to provide sea route to Azerbaijan and other Central Asian states to help them undertake various projects of economic importance. The president expressed the hope that foreign and private sectors would undertake joint ventures, which would be of great benefit to the two countries. The president also said that efforts were being made by Pakistan to provide a stable and peaceful environment in the region for economic development and social progress of our people. This was the main purpose of Pakistan's endeavors for resolving Kashmir issue and for finding a settlement in Afghanistan. Pakistan, he said, also wanted an end to Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan.

The president of Azerbaijan said his country and Pakistan could take more steps to further strengthen the cordial relationship between the two countries. He expressed his concern over the Kashmir dispute and assured Azerbaijan's continued support to Pakistan's position on it at the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] and all other international forums. He also expressed his gratitude for Pakistan's condemnation of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan.

Earlier, on arrival at Islamabad airport on a three-day state visit to Pakistan, President Heydar Aliyev was given a warm reception. The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, and the minister-in-waiting, Mr. Khalid Ahmad Kharal, received him at the airport.

Pakistan: Draft Double Taxation Accord Signed With Azerbaijan

BK0704161896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 6 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan and Azerbaijan have signed a draft agreement for the avoidance of double taxation. It was signed by head of International Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Mr. (Israyeel Saber Ogly Ahmedov), and member, Income Tax, CBR [Central Board of Revenue], Mr. Iqbal Farid after negotiations between the two sides in Islamabad yesterday. The agreement will become operative after approval of the respective governments. The treaty would further facilitate economic cooperation and bring the two countries closer to each other.

Pakistan: Editorial Claims U.S. Aiding India's Missile Deployment

BK0904133996 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 9 Apr 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Who is Helping India With Missile Deployment"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The American agenda for South Asia has been further unmasked by the statement of Lt. General S K Sharma, the General Officer Commanding of the Indian Army's training command. In a report recently carried by the Indian daily 'Tribune' General Sharma was quoted as saying that the US military experts have helped the Indian Army in a training program on the deployment of Prithvi missiles!

It will indeed be shocking to those who still see some moral fiber in American foreign policy particularly with reference to nuclear non-proliferation. On the one hand, Washington continuously searches for fabricated stories, rumors and imaginative reports about Pakistan's nuclear program and never waits to verify or confirm such concoctions before. Pakistan is brought in the dock. We are told to cap our program, to sign NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty], to stop trading with China even in those items which have little relevance to defense oriented nuclear program, and economic sanctions and embargoes are always kept in waiting-in case we would not oblige. On the other hand, Indians are not only encouraged in pursuing whatever they are doing, no restrictions are imposed on their trade with those countries who do not hesitate to share their nuclear technology, but also, if they lack any infrastructure or training in the use of lethal weapons, they are provided the required facilities. What is frightening is that publicly, the United States has been asking India to refrain from developing its missile technology, whereas, in practice the Americans are not only providing the necessary skill but also training in how to use these weapons of mass destruction.

It is not a classified information that the Prithvi missile, the short-range weapon (250 kilometres), is nuclear capable and Pakistan-specific. By assisting India in its development and even deployment, the Americans are virtually becoming a party to India's anti-Pakistan agenda. In addition, the joint American and Indian naval exercises have been conducted off the Indian coast of Kochi. This honey-moon between the United States and India in this most sensitive area of defense, could have no other message for Pakistan but to watch out and not to look at Washington as a neutral spectator of the South Asian affairs. We are not concerned with Uncle Sam's perverse logic that training in deployment of Pakistan-specific missiles is only a formality and nothing more. Such formalities in the past have extracted a very heavy price from us and we are not prepared to undergo that agony again. Even if, as the Americans would argue, this partnership is aimed at China's harassment, it cannot take place at our expense. We are also led to believe that this assistance is being offered in return for India's pledge of refraining from developing the long-range Agni (2500 kilometres) and Surya (22,000 kilometres) missiles. These pledges are not even worth the words that are employed in articulating them. All that noise about America's concern for the posterity to have a world of peace and harmony is nothing but a blueprint for the desirables to develop nuclear technology and the skill of using that to the extent that the undesirable ones remain under constant fear and threat. Islamabad should know where do we stand in this polarized world.

Pakistan: Commentary Reviews Visit by U.S. Senator Brown

BK0904015296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 8 Apr 96

[Commentary by A.B.S. Jafri]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It is not often that a foreign dignitary is decorated by the president of Pakistan with the country's highest of civil awards. The ceremony at the presidential palace in Islamabad on Sunday [7 April] was simple and solemn when President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari conferred the Nishan-i-Qaid-i-Azam on Senator Hank Brown of the United States. The brief citation recognized the services Sen. Brown had rendered to cement relations between Pakistan and his country, removing some irksome leftovers of an earlier political phase.

Pakistan and the United States have an established tradition of close friendship and also comradeship on a variety of major world developments. Relations of such close nature do occasionally move under a passing cloud. One such cloud was a law called the Pressler Amendment, which not only proved to be less than fair to Pakistan but rendered the United States itself in a remarkably untenable situation. Pakistan and the United States had contracted a deal under which Pakistan had made cash payment in advance of the delivery of the contracted equipment of a defense relevance. Then came the Pressler law, which forbade the delivery of the goods contracted and paid for in advance.

The Pressler law was doubly hurtful to Pakistan. In the first place, it blocked delivery of goods which had already been paid for under an open commercial deal. On top of it, the Pressler law was inherently flawed in being Pakistan-specific. It applied only to Pakistan and by name. This aspect of the law rendered it questionable on the point of legal validity. However, Pakistan had to pursue the matter in its national interest, because millions of dollars were involved as also the defense equipment needed by Pakistan for its security forces. To be fair to the President Bill Clinton of the United States, it has to be said that he recognized the strength of Pakistan's case but found the existence of the Pakistan-specific Pressler law in his way.

The services rendered by Sen. Hank Brown have to be seen in this context. He took up this cause, which was compromising Pakistan's interest no less than the image of the United States, which had received money and was unable to fulfill its part of an international contract. As a result of Sen. Hank Brown's principled and determined efforts, lawmakers at the Capitol Hill were persuaded to adopt the amendment, which effectively redresses the wrong perpetrated by the Pressler law. This amendment, which stands to the name of Sen. Hank Brown, serves the cause not only of Pakistan but also of the United States in so far as it eases Washington out of an embarrassing spot where it stood in a position of holding hard cash and unable to provide the contracted goods. Thanks to the endeavors of Sen. Hank Brown, both the United States and Pakistan stand to benefit.

Sen. Brown's interest extend far beyond the concern to undo the wrong caused by the Pressler law. He is deeply interested in the affairs of the South Asian region and its complicated problems. It is a long and dismaying list of intractable issues. On top of it all stands the Kashmir dispute. Although it is as old as independent Pakistan and India, the Kashmir problem has been for the last five years an ongoing armed military action by the Indian occupation authorities on the one side and unarmed peaceful campaigners in the cause of their right to self-determination on the other. Sen. Brown has taken advantage of his current visit to Pakistan to make a closer study of the nature of the conflict in Indian-held parts of the disputed state. He has established direct contact with the Azad Kashmir leadership during a visit to the capital of Azad Kashmir. He has been able to see the reality of the fearsome situation across the Line of Control, which is supposed to represent a line drawn by the United States [as heard] to separate the Azad Kashmir and the parts of the state under the military occupation and oppression of Indian authorities in New Delhi.

Sen. Brown has said that the United States believes in a peaceful political solution to the Kashmir dispute. The U.S. line is exactly congruent with the consistent position held by Pakistan. This country also wants a peaceful negotiated progress toward the holding of a fair and free plebiscite in the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir to determine whether the people of the state wish to join Pakistan or India. And this is exactly what the United Nations — that is, the world community — is committed to from the very first day when the dispute was referred to it by India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Sen. Brown's visit and his contact with Kashmiri leaders will no doubt give him a clearer and deeper understanding of the political and moral issues involved in the Kashmir dispute and Pakistan's stand on it.

Pakistan: Editorial Views Ongoing Talks With U.S. for Arms Purchase

BK0704123296 Islamabad THE NATION in English 7 Apr 96 p 6

[Editorial: "American Arms"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The talks that were being held in Washington between a Pakistani delegation and representatives of the U.S. Government to finalize the details for the transfer of long held-up military equipment to Pakistan have reportedly ended without the two sides reaching an agreement. Though the Pakistani officials remain optimistic over the release of the military equipment as authorized under the Brown Amendment, the only positive thing seemingly achieved by the meeting was that a number of Foreign Military Sales (FMS) cases, including Pakistan's were "reconciled". The rest of the issues concerning the deal may have to wait until later. For now there is some confusion as to whether a new move to stall the equipment's transfer by six prominent U.S. Senators aimed at overturning the Brown Amendment, will carry any weight with President Clinton. Surprising as it is, new element of confusion in the already confused situation is a big sum of more than one-and-a-half million dollars that the Pakistanis claim to have delivered to the Americans but remains unaccounted for in the U.S. record. Hopefully, it is only a book-keepers mistake involving mixing of item heads, etc.

The main issue of concern for this country is the indecision which the U.S. Administration continues to treat the deal by holding back the arms that are Pakistan's due as per common rules of business transactions between civilized parties as well as the Brown Amendment, a legislation specifically enacted for the case. This indecision is believed to be linked to the reports that the Administration has not made up its yet as to the credibility of a CIA report pertaining to the supply of nuclear technology-related ring magnets from China to Pakistan. As a matter of fact, the six Senators have also based their move on the CIA report. That perhaps was the reason why the U.S. administration has also failed to announce the schedule for the shipment of the weapons. But as pointed out by Senator Hank Brown recently, even if the Chinese have been violative of the U.S. non-proliferation laws, there is no legal justification for the U.S. to withhold the military equipment for which it received the money a long time ago. Failing that it should at least observe common decency and return the money to Pakistan for goods that it has not delivered. It must also return the full amount of money that this country paid for the purchase of F-16s but which the U.S. has now decided to sell to a third country and transfer the proceeds to Pakistan, even if the money thus raised is lower than what the U.S. aircraft company took from Pakistan. For the U.S. to want to keep the money, even if part of it, like this and walk away with the merchandise is, to say the least, unlawful and unethical.

Pakistan: China Reportedly Unhappy Over Saindak Copper Deal

BK0904094596 Karachi DAWN in English 9 Apr 96 pp 1, 16

[Report by Parvaiz Ishfaq Rana]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, April — Pakistan government's preference of a Western country over China to export 5 million dollars worth of copper from the Chinese-aided project, Saindak in Balochistan, has caused heart burning among the Chinese.

China enjoys the right of first refusal under a 1990 contract, Ma Lin of the China National Nonferrous Metals Import and Export Corporation (CNIEC) and a member of the visiting Chinese delegation told Dawn on Monday [8 Apr]. He asserted that China should have been approached before concluding any deal with any other country.

Under the contract, he said China agreed to extend $80 million export credit to develop Saindak copper mines by giving equipment and technological assistance to Pakistan. Mr. Ma said it was also agreed that Pakistan would pay back the credit either in kind (copper) or in cash. But even after selling copper to a third country, Pakistan had failed to pay back the money which had caused disappointment to China.

Mr. Ma said China was always keen to buy copper produced from Saindak to meet its huge industrial consumption and had been indicating to lift any quantity after Pakistan meets its local needs. Responding to a questions he said "We understand that if China takes the product (copper) against its extended credit facility Pakistan will face a liquidity crunch and run short of working capital badly needed for the project. But, he said, the CNIEC was ready to purchase any quantity of copper produced at Saindak and pay in cash.

He said there was no way to improve the balance of trade position, which was heavily in favor of China, other than for Pakistan to sell the Saindak copper to China. China having a huge agriculture base cannot import rice, sugar or even textile products from Pakistan and I believe that copper is the only item which could help improve the balance of trade between the two countries, he explained.

Saindak mines are estimated to yield, for about 20 years, an average annual production of 15,810 tonnes of copper, 147 tonnes of gold and 276 tonnes of silver. According to a feasibility report, once production starts, the government will earn $55 million annually. Moreover, when a better price is available on the international market, the project could become an important source of foreign exchange and help recover the investment made on it.

Pakistan: Stolen Kazakh Uranium Ore Reportedly for Sale in Peshawar

BK0904092996 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 9 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Behroz Khan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar — Pakistan may again be the focus of world attention as there are strong rumors that uranium ore is up for sale in Peshawar.

Sources told this correspondent that this ore has its origins in the 249 kilograms of enriched uranium which were stolen from nuclear plants in Kazakhstan.

Shockingly, a gentleman also claimed to be in possession of liquid enriched uranium which was stolen during November-December last year from Kazakhstan's Ust-Kamenogorsk province. The stuff found its way through the newly liberated Central Asian states via China and Russia to Peshawar and Afghanistan. The Kazakh province is situated on the border with China.

"We were approached by an intelligence agency about a month back and they wanted to strike a deal. But it was difficult to deal in such a sensitive business without proper channels," informed the source. The offer, the source said, was made through a tribal trader belonging to Khyber Agency.

Sources said besides Peshawar, similar stuff was available in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif as several Afghan commanders have realized the importance of the ore and its future business prospects. "It is not clear as to how much of the stolen U-235 has made its way to Pakistan. However, dealing in uranium is much discussed these days in Peshawar's illegal goods market in Hayatabad."

It is also reported that a gang has the photographs of the special alloys used for making nuclear bombs.

Pakistan: Opposition Figures Blame Government for Death of Activist

BK0504111496 Islamabad THE NATION in English 5 Apr 96 pp 1, 13

[Report by Lahore correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Declaring Javed Ashraf as the Shaheed [martyr] of Muslim League, the PML(N)

[Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz] top leaders have termed Javed Ashraf's murder by police as the worst kind of the State-terrorism during last two and a half year. They vowed that their movement to save Pakistan would continue and the death of PML (N) would inject a new life to the Opposition's struggle.

The PML(N) President Mian Nawaz Sharif said that Javed was targeted to death under a plot. "It does not matter the police registered the FIR [first information report] or not, we have registered the FIR and the responsible persons will be held accountable," said grieved Nawaz. He said he was struggling to save Pakistan from anti-State and anti-people forces, to save democratic system, to ensure supremacy of the judiciary and constitution. Javed sacrifice will strengthen Muslim League's struggle to save Pakistan.

Nawaz warned the government that Javed Ashraf is not dead and his shahadat [martyrdom] has created thousands of Javed Ashraf among the ranks of PML(N). He said Javed is not among us but he has neared us to the destiny. He said the Government and administration were involved in the murder. He said after Karachi Government has targetted Lahore for State-terrorism. [sentence as published]

President PML (N) Punjab Senator, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain said it was an act of barbarism by Benazir Government and she will have to pay for it.

He reminded Benazir that her father played the politics of bullets and she has also chosen the same way but she should kept in mind the end of her father. He said after facing defeat at judicial front the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] is introducing State-terrorism in the politics which is not only harmful for PPP itself but the democratic system also. Shujaat said considering Lahore as a stronghold of Muslim League Benazir has targeted this city. He said the streets of Punjab have been converted into stronghold of PML(N) and people will response to any call of the Opposition in some style as Lahorites did. He said Javed was a committed worker of Muslim League and knowing it the provincial administration decided to eliminate him.

He wanted the rulers that no bullet, jail or any other threat can force the Muslim League to stop its struggle against anti-Pakistan rulers. He said Javed sacrificed his life for the Muslim League and Pakistan and his killers will not go unpunished.

Acting Opposition Leader Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Pervez Elahi said that Javed Ashraf was an asset of the Muslim League and his killing was preplanned. He said Javed is shaheed of Muslim League and his killers will be held accountable. He said the government through such brutal acts wants to keep the PML-N workers away from their struggle. He said after loosing judicial fight the government decided to target PML-N activists and Javed was the first target. He said the PML (N) has waged war to save Pakistan from the anti-State rulers and warned the Government that it cannot stop them. He said the PML (N) workers will accomplish the mission of Javed Ashraf. Senior Vice President PML (N) Punjab Mian Azhar said that Javed Ashraf was killed by rulers because he was a committed Pakistani and was struggling to save Pakistan. He also reminded Benazir that her father also assassinated his political opponents and as a result of which he was hanged. Benazir Bhutto, Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Arif Nakai and Senior Minister Mushtaq Awan will be held accountable for this murder, he added.

Secretary Information PML (N) Punjab Pir Binyameen Rizvi said that Javed was murdered on the directions of Benazir Bhutto. He said she issued orders after the World Cup final match when Javed arranged a demonstration and chanted slogans in favour of Nawaz Sharif. He said Inspector General Police Punjab, Chief Secretary and SSP [Senior Superintendent of Police] Lahore masterminded the plan to kill Javed.

Pakistan: Daily Views 'Avoidable' Death of Opposition Activist

BK0604131096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 6 Apr 96 p 6

[Editorial: "An Avoidable Tragedy"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The death of a PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League — Nawaz Group] local leader, Javaid Ashraf, in the course of a political rally, is most unfortunate. Because of the circumstances in which it happened and because of its fallout on the already frayed relations between the government and the Opposition, a judicial enquiry is called for. The Leader of the Opposition, Mian Nawaz Sharif has called for a strike. And while other protest measures are being contemplated which may cause even more trouble, Mian Sahib has reportedly deferred his response to the Prime Minister's letter, in which she had invited him for talks. Whether this tragic death of a promising young man was preplanned, as Mian Sahib has alleged or, was due to the excessive use of violence by an individual police constable or, was an accident in a highly charged atmosphere in which firearms were used by both sides, are matters which only a judicial enquiry will determine. But from the press reports certain facts can be gleaned. These show an absence of proper guidance to the participants of the rally who were presumably feeling incensed at the prolonged detention of Mian Shahbaz Sharif and wanted to register their protest against the maltreatment of their leaders. While there is nothing wrong with the taking out of a rally to register such protest, as it is within the democratic rights of an Opposition party, both its timing and its venue ought to have been reconsidered. The choice of April 4 (which is the death anniversary of the founder of the PPP) [Pakistan People's Party] as a day of protest, was particularly unfortunate. A death anniversary is hardly the time to come out shouting slogans against the dead person. Apart from the fact it is against our cultural norms, it becomes a provocation which can result in a clash between rival workers and can lead to bloodshed. That it did not turn into such an ugly situation was fortunate. The credit for that goes not to the organisers of the rally, but to chance. The planners of the rally, nevertheless, ought to have taken such a contingency into account. Then again, the area of The Mall having been put off-limits for rallies, the chances of a clash with the police ought to have been considered. Had someone thought of these eventualities, at least the women workers would have been kept out of the rally, by him. But even if all that is condoned because of the lack of imagination of the planners of the rally, the question is: who decided that the police should resort to firing, which has not resulted in avoidable loss of life?

Because of the high handedness of the police and because there was no responsible leadership at hand to guide the rally, a young man is dead, a manager of a bank is lying wounded and innocent citizens have suffered huge loss to their property. While those found guilty of these offences, be they from the police or from a political party, should be punished, who is going to go to the parents of the dead young man to explain why he died and whose fault it was? The real tragedy is that all this could easily have been avoided had someone spent just five minutes thinking of the pros and cons of such a decision.

Pakistan: Cabinet Views Terrorism Threat, Opposition Leader's Death

BK0904102096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 9 Apr 96 pp 1, 11

[Report by Syed Nadeem]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Islamabad — The federal cabinet has accused Leader of the Opposition Mian Nawaz Sharif of drawing up a plan to instigate violence and bloodshed in the country.

The cabinet met on Monday [8 April] with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in the chair. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Khaled Ahmed Kharal while briefing newsmen made the claim that the Leader of the Opposition had established contacts with various ethnic and sectarian groups, which have military training, and asked them for assistance. [passage omitted]

The meeting was informed that the government had already arrested a group of terrorists that was to assassinate some elected representatives during the World Cup and another group that was to indulge in acts of violence in Faisalabad. However, Khaled Kharal said the government was determined to foil all such nefarious plans and was fully capable of frustrating "the evil designs of all those who were out to destroy the country's peace and harmony." [passage omitted]

Discussing the recent incident in Lahore, the cabinet was told that Javaid Ashraf, private secretary to Shahbaz Sharif, led an armed group with the objective of setting a police kiosk on fire. According to the forensic expert the Minister said the lead pellet found in the body of Javaid Ashraf was fired from a smooth bore weapon whereas the police officers on duty carried Chinese made rifles.

"This obviously shows that he was killed not by the police but by somebody else to fulfill his own ambitions. The government holds Mr. Nawaz Sharif responsible for it and warns members of the Muslim Students Federation, young people and others not to allow themselves to be used by power-hungry politicians for their ulterior motives," he said. [passage omitted]

Pakistan: Leghari Offers Condolences on Kashmiri Leader's Death

BK0804161396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has offered condolences over the death of prominent Kashmiri leader Jalil Andrabi, who was recently killed by Indian troops in the occupied Kashmir. In a condolence message to Begum Rafadara, widow of Kashmiri leader, the president said he was deeply shocked at the brutal murder of Jalil Andrabi who had peacefully championed the cause of Kashmiri people.

Pakistan: 9 Frontier Constabulary Members Killed in Ambush

BK0704095696 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 7 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Ejaz Khan in Quetta]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nine Frontier Constabulary (FC) men were killed early Saturday [6 April] morning when their vehicle was ambushed by armed smugglers at Kalag, some 10 kilometres from the town of Panjgur.

The dead included a major, a naib subaider and seven Jawans. A Defence Ministry spokesman confirmed the incident later in the evening saying the FC men were killed in a gunfire with smugglers. However, the spokesman did not mention the losses on the assailants side.

Official sources said the FC personnel were patrolling the area, nearly 460 kilometres from the provincial capital, when their vehicle came under intense fire, reportedly from sophisticated weapons. The ensuing gun battle resulted in the killing of nine FC men on the spot.

It appeared that the assailants had the prior information of the patrol as they were dug in and their attack was so sudden that the FC men could not offer much resistance. According to a PPI report, the FC men were returning from their routine night patrol of the area when they came under attack.

Sources said the attackers fled the scene of the crime leaving the dead in a pool of blood. Senior officials of the Frontier Constabulary along with well-equipped troops rushed to the spot soon after receiving the news of the attack. The bodies were rushed to the Panjgur hospital where the doctors performed autopsy. Later, the bodies were transported to their native towns for burial.

The law enforcement agencies have launched a massive hunt for the killers and cordoned off the area. They are reported to have been checking all incoming and outgoing vehicles but have not made any arrest so far. It is also learnt that an inquiry has been ordered into the killing and to ascertain the motives of the attackers.

The dead FC men include Major Muhammad Aslam, Naib Subaidar Kaleem Khan, Sepoy Rasool Muhammad, Sepoy Habit Khan, Sepoy Muhammad Ali, Sepoy Muhammad Yaseen, Sepoy Mavez Gul, Sepoy Bayzad Khan and Niak Sardar Khan. The deceased major was the commander of Mekran Scouts, Panjgur Wing.

Tension gripped the area as soon as the news of the ambush spread. Locals have expressed concern over the law and order situation and feared such bloody attacks might occur again if the law enforcers did not take precautionary measure.

Pakistan: Altaf Accuses Prime Minister of Serving 'Foreign Masters'

BK0504100796 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 5 Apr 96 p 12

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi — Accusing Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of working against the country's integrity, the self-exiled MQM [Muhajir Qaummi Movement] chief, Altaf Hussain, said that Muhajirs would not let her to accomplish the task given by foreign masters.

He was talking to journalists on telephone from London during Senator Ishtiaq Azhar's press conference at the party's MPA [member of Provincial Assembly] Hostel here Thursday [4 April].

Altaf said the government-sponsored attack at "Nine-Zero" on Wednesday was in fact an attempt to create a civil war, foiled by the MQM through showing patience. "Working against nation and the country is the tradition of PPP [Pakistan People's Party] as its founder, whose death anniversary was being observed on government expenses, was responsible for breaking apart the country", he added.

Altaf said now the PPP government started killing people in Punjab as the additional secretary of PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)] Punjab was gunned down extra-judicially in Lahore.

Altaf reiterated the MQM will not accept the voter lists in which the government manipulated the figures and cut the number of Muhajirs voters to half.

Senator Ishtiaq Azhar, in his press conference, appealed to the president and chief of Army Staff to intervene and refrain the government from extra-judicial killing of Muhajir youths.

The MQM senator asked the people to observe Prayers Day today (Friday) to get rid of the PPP government.

Ishtiaq said while Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur remained shut in protest against the killing of Mujahirs, yet another MQM activist, Tariq Aziz, was murdered by the security agencies. He said that Tariq Aziz was arrested by the police from FB [Federal B] Area Wednesday night and shot dead in Orangi Town showing another fake encounter.

Replying a question, he said the party leadership was in touch with Nawaz Sharif and attempts were being made to contact Ajmal Khattak for consultation of a countrywide strike.

Meanwhile, member government negotiating team, Zohair Akram Nadeem said the DIG [Deputy Inspector General of Police] Karachi, Dr Shoaib Suddle, has assured to probe into the incident of alleged attack by Sindh Ittehad on "Nine-Zero", residence and party headquarter of MQM chief Altaf Hussain.

Zohair said that he met the DIG and condemned the alleged attack by Sindh Ittehad, headed by Zafar Jhundair. Zohair said Shoib Suddle had directed the concerned police station to submit report and to take action against those responsible for the incident.

Pakistan: Ali Rejects Indian 'Ploy' To Hold Elections in Kashmir

BK0804005196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has rejected India's ploy to hold elections in occupied Kashmir, saying that a fair and UN-supervised plebiscite is the only solution to the long-standing Kashmir problem. While distributing checks among the flood-affected people in Kasur District yesterday, the foreign minister said the day when India will have to think seriously about the Kashmir issue is not far away. Referring to the continuing Indian brutalities, he said the matter is being raised at different international forums. He said Pakistan is fully aware of its defense requirements against the backdrop of the Indian nuclear and missile development program. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said the government has launched a comprehensive flood control scheme with the cooperation of the World Bank, which will cost billions of rupees. The foreign minister gave away 1,100 checks totaling 5.5 million rupees to the people who had been affected by floods.

Pakistan: Editorial Calls For Nuclear Test 'Immediately'

BK0804134296 Rawalpindi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 5 Apr 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Pakistani Nuclear Bomb — New Claim About its Computer Test"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Former Army Chief General Aslam Beg has said that Pakistan's nuclear program has never been capped. He has also disclosed that Islamabad conducted a computer test instead of going for a nuclear explosion. Both these claims — the noncapping of the nuclear program and the computer test — are Gen. Beg's new revelations. Earlier, Gen. Beg himself had confirmed U.S. claims that Pakistan's nuclear program had been capped in August 1990. The former army chief is now contradicting his own previous statement.

Anyway, it would be welcome news if Pakistan's nuclear program has not really been capped according to U.S. instructions. If the program was capped, it should be decapped [preceding word in English] immediately and, given the national demand, a nuclear device should be exploded to demonstrate the country's nuclear capability. Even if a laboratory or computer test of a nuclear bomb is technically feasible and possible, there is no reason why Pakistan should refrain from exploding a nuclear device and should limit itself only to conducting a laboratory or computer test. India has already conducted a nuclear test and is now preparing for another, a developed country like France has conducted a series of nuclear tests defying world opinion, and China has also been conducting such tests to demonstrate its nuclear might to the world. The computer game has now become child's play. Nuclear formulas are also now available in books, and certain promising children even test them on a limited scale. The real breakthrough, however, lies in exploding and testing the device practically.

That is why Mirza Aslam Beg, together with other national leaders, should forcefully urge the Government of Pakistan to explode a nuclear device immediately to prove the country's nuclear capability without taking into account any outside pressure. Islamabad should also press the members of the nuclear club to include Pakistan in their ranks. Pakistan's nuclear program is indispensable for safeguarding its independence, sovereignty, and security. Power in the true sense is that which is visible to the enemy. Even the holy Koran commands: Keep your horses ready!

Pakistan: Asif Reiterates Peaceful Purposes of Nuclear Program

BK0604133096 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 6 Apr 96 pp 1, 12

[Unattributed Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kasur — Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has said that Pakistan's nuclear capability was only for peaceful purposes. He said Pakistan is fully aware of its defence.

He was talking to local newsmen at Wapda [Water and Power Development Authority] Circuit House here Friday [5 April].

About the Kashmir problem, Asif said the present government had effectively projected the issue at all international levels. He said Indian government was announcing so-called elections in the occupied Kashmir just for its face saving. He said even Farooq Abdullah, who is a stooge of Indian government, had announced to boycott the elections in the held Kashmir.

Talking about the MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement], the foreign minister said Altaf Hussain was not the representative of muhajirs, who had rendered countless sacrifices for Pakistan. He said Altaf Hussain had no right to represent Muhajirs as he (Altaf) was not sincere to them.

Sardar Asif said the PML (J) [Pakistan Muslim League — Junejo Group] leaders are ready to quit ministries for the unity of the Pakistan Muslim League and added now the ball is in the PML(N)'s [Nawaz Group] court.

Pakistan: Taleban Official Denies Links to ISI

BK0804083196 Islamabad THE NATION in English 8 Apr 96 pp 1, 13

[Report by "staff reporter" in Islamabad]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mullah Rabbani, Deputy leader of the Taleban, has denied receiving any support from Pakistan and has also refuted allegations that it has links with ISI [Inter Services Intelligence].

In an interview published in a Pushto newspaper from Quetta, Mullah Rabbani claimed that Pakistan could oust Rabbani by helping the Taleban, which Pakistan had not done whereas Rabbani was being supported by Russia, India and Iran.

He said the Taleban had agreed to Pakistan's proposal for repair of the 900 km long road from Chaman to Torghundy since the repair was good for the development of Pakistan-Afghan relations and the central Asian republics.

Mullah Rabbani's offer for reconciliation was conditional to Rabbani's resignation.

Pakistan: Editorial Views Prospects for Government-Opposition Talks

BK0804084596 Islamabad THE NATION in English 8 Apr 96 p 16

[Editorial: "Gov't-Opposition Talks?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mian Nawaz Shariff has said that he is not going to reply to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's letter inviting him for talks, in protest against Javaid Ashraf's murder. If she, in Mian Sahib's words, had 'sent bullets in her letter', how could he possibly send a reply. Central Vice-President of the PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz] Sheikh Rashid Ahmad, using similar language on the occasion, he said that 'how did the government expect roses after firing bullets'. Yet surprisingly, he also said that a dialogue with the government was necessary in the interest of democracy. Whether his view would prevail and Mian Sahib is eventually persuaded to revise his decision, is not certain. Emotions in the League circles run high because of the perception that Javaid Ashraf's death was not accidental, as the local administration is trying to make out, but targeted killing of a valuable and well-known worker of theirs. Their efforts to register a FIR [First Information Report] against the Prime Minister, the Punjab chief Minister and Punjab Senior Minister for the murder having failed, Mian Sahib has indicated that they would now go to the High Court to get a verdict in favor of the FIR, regardless of the outcome of such a move, it would certainly act as a disincentive for talks. Therefore, while the climate is obviously far from conducive for holding a dialogue, the p[illegible] made by Sheikh Rashid cannot be rejected out of hand. His contention that dialogue is essential for running a democratic system is basically sound, and the need for a dialogue becomes all the more imperative when the differences between he parties become more acute. Because the alternative to dialogue is violent confrontation and that is precisely the condition in which democratic elements crumble and undemocratic forces take over.

Therefore, while one would tend to agree with Mian Sahib that the pitch for the talks has badly been queered, it would be relevant to suggest that the ground on which talks are being rejected is, as far as one can see, hypothetical. Mian Sahib and the League claim that it was a deliberate murder. The other side says that it is not, going even to the extent that no policeman was responsible for it. Why not settle this issue first through a judicial enquiry? Or, the other way round, if the government claims that its hands are clean, why does it not order a judicial enquiry? Let that decide who is right and who is wrong. If the League is justified. And if the government is right, then Sheikh Rashid's suggestion should be heeded before it is too late.

Pakistan: Editorial Questions Effectiveness of Kashmir Policy

BK0804124396 Rawalpindi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 5 Apr 96 p 6

[Editorial: "China and Iran's Displeasure With Pakistan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has said that China and Iran no longer support Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. The foreign minister's statement indicates that our foreign policy has not been effective and we are becoming alienated in the world. The non-Muslim countries bitterly oppose the Islamic world, and because Pakistan enjoys a prominent place in the Islamic world they never miss a chance to target us. Yet even in the Islamic world, the number of countries that claim to have fraternal relations with Pakistan but maintain friendship with India is increasing.

We have centuries-old religious, cultural, trade, and other ties with Iran and our friendship with China has stood the test of time. The recent statement by the Chinese foreign minister indicates otherwise, however. Until recently, Iran wholeheartedly supported our stand on Kashmir, but suddenly there is no agreement between us on the issue of Kashmir, which is also called minor Iran. Iran's trade with India is increasing. A plan has been worked out to supply Iranian gas to India through

Pakistan. Our government has reportedly agreed to this in principle.

The Kashmir issue does not involve Pakistan alone; it is an issue for the whole Islamic world. Have we made Iran realize the fact that strengthening India by allowing it to do business with Iran means strengthening it against the whole Islamic world?

We have set up a federal committee on Kashmir. Numerous delegations have made foreign trips, but these trips have turned out to be mere excursions. If they had been effective we would not be in the position of saying that our age-old friends no longer support us on an issue like Kashmir. This should make the government realize how effective the Kashmir committee or the foreign trips have been.

Pakistan: Lahore Police Take Action Against Protesting PML-N Workers

BK0804041696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The police registered cases against Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz [PML-N] group workers for creating law and order situation in Lahore today. Earlier, police fired tear gas shells and resorted to mild baton charges to disperse a group of people who had pelted the police with stones and created an unpleasant situation. Some policemen were slightly injured in the incident. The group, comprising of workers from the PML-N group, had gathered outside a mosque following a religious ceremony for the salvation of the soul of late Javaid Ashraf, a local PML-N leader, who was killed in a shooting incident on Thursday [4 April].

Pakistan: Babar Notes Plot To Create Karachi-Like Situation in Punjab

BK0904121796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The interior minister, retired Major General Nasirullah Khan Babar, has said that the events in Lahore on the 4th of this month were part of a conspiracy against the government, the state, and the system to take the events of Karachi to spill over to Punjab. He was winding up the three-day debate on an adjournment motion moved by the opposition members about the killing of a Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz [PML-N] group activist, Mr. Javaid Ashraf, in Lahore.

The interior minister said there have been a number of meetings between the leader of the opposition and Altaf Hussain designed to carry over the Karachi situation to Punjab. He said the opposition is worried over the restoration of peace in Karachi and has no sympathy for those who have been killed by terrorists in Karachi. He said the opposition wanted to create situation for its political gain, as they are having great difficulty now because Karachi situation has been totally controlled. He described the whole incident as a premeditated act of sabotage.

Mr. Dost Mohammad Faizi, Rao Qaiser Ali Khan, Mian Gul Aurangzeb, Mr. Ejazul Haq, Syed Iftekharul Hassan Shah, Mr. Ghulam Dastgir Khan, and Mr. Abdus Sattar Laleka took part in the discussion on the motion and criticized the killing of PLM-N group activist. They claimed that he was leading a peaceful procession and that opposition's role should be accepted in taking out such processions. Mr. Sher Mohammad Baloch of PPP [Pakistan People's Party] said the murder of the activist was the result of a conspiracy by the opposition for achieving political mileage. The house will meet again tomorrow afternoon at 1600.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Motion To Extend State of Emergency Presented to Parliament

BK0904120796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A motion to extend the state of emergency with retrospective effect from the 4th of this month was presented this morning in parliament. Minister of Irrigation, Power, and Energy and Deputy Minister for Defense Colonel Anuruddha Ratwatte proposed the motion. Speaking on the occasion, Col. Ratwatte said that a war situation continues in the north and the east. However, he said, that he would not discuss the future operations of the security forces in these areas. The minister said that the government was determined to eliminate the terrorists who are against peace. But he said that the government cannot decide on a timeframe to end this war. He said though the government expected to solve this problem soon, there were several impediments created by interested groups.

The minister also disclosed that he had received information that some antisocial elements were trying to provoke communal violence and disrupt the peace process of the government. Several LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres were arrested in the recent past in Nuwara Eliya and Kandy. Minister Ratwatte revealed that the LTTE terrorists were not only frequenting the areas of Anuradhapura, Puttalam, Pollonaruwa, Monaragalla, and Badulla on the borders of the northern and the eastern provinces, but they have crept into Colombo and the suburbs, the hill country, and the estates. Therefore, the minister said that the government has to extend the state of emergency from the 4th of this month. The minister pointed out that since under the normal laws governing the country it was difficult to remand suspected terrorists, it was, therefore, necessary to apply emergency regulations to bring about such arrests.

Referring to the local government election, the minister said that a large number of police officers have to be mobilized for duties during elections. He said already many police personnel have been dispatched to Jaffna. However, he affirmed that the government did not have any ideas to postpone elections for a long time. The state of emergency will prevail only for a short time. Minister Ratwatte said the only purpose of having an emergency rule was to combat terrorism. However, the day-to-day life of the general public will not be affected by this.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1111 GMT on 9 April reports: "A party in Sri Lanka's ruling coalition Tuesday broke ranks with the government to oppose a nationwide emergency declared by President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

"The leftist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) denounced the tough emergency rule and LSSP MP Vasudeva Nanayakkara said the party will abstain from voting with the government to ratify the president's action. The LSSP has four members in the 225-member assembly where Kumaratunga's governing coalition has only a one-seat majority. The main opposition party also opposes the emergency rule."]

Sri Lanka: Government Bans 2 Stations' Newscasts Over Curfew 'Panic'

BK0904123696 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 9 Apr 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An immediate investigation has been ordered into the circumstances that led to the announcement of a "declaration of curfew" by the Sirasa news broadcast.

With the noon news broadcast on Monday [8 April], Sirasa announced that a curfew had been declared by the government, whereas only a emergency was imposed.

Soon after this news broadcast by Sirasa, a full-scale investigation was ordered by the government and the report is to be submitted within 24 hours according to a top government source.

Defence Ministry sources said that the CID [Criminal Investigation Department] was investigating the matter and the persons concerned with the news broadcast were questioned by the CID on Monday.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1209 GMT on 9 April reports the government's decision following its investigation into the erroneous broadcast of a curfew announcement.

[AFP reports: "The Sri Lankan government Tuesday suspended news broadcasts over two private radio channels after they admitted misreporting the state of emergency here as a nation-wide curfew.

["The English-language Yes FM and the Sinhalese Sirasa FM channels, both owned by the same company, were ordered to halt their regular news bulletins with immediate effect, a government spokesman said.

["He said the action was taken pending an inquiry into Monday's broadcasts which triggered panic across the country with people scrambling to stock up on food and fuel after the 'curfew' announcement.

["The police Criminal Investigations Department (CID) continued to question the news director of the station which has already suspended him after the erroneous report.

["We regret the report and carried several corrections making it clear that only emergency had been declared and not curfew," an official of Yes-FM radio station said."]

Sri Lanka: Colombo Missile Attacks Reported

BK0904131196 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 4 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] launched an offensive on a Sri Lankan troop patrol in Manal Aru locality yesterday, killing two soldiers. LTTE and Sri Lankan troops also clashed in Manippai the day before yesterday, though there was report on casualities.

Sri Lankan troops are launching continuous missile attacks on the civilian population in Vadamarachchi and Thenmarachchi. These attacks are also being carried out from Vettilaikerny camp. Meanwhile, it is learned that there was huge bomb blast in Velikamam east around 1630 yesterday and that a pall of smoke covered the area. People in Wanni area are building trenches as they fear aerial and missile attacks from the Sri Lankan racist forces. Trenches are being built in schools, by the sides of roads, and thoroughfares.

Trucks laden with essential goods and relief material have been detained at Vavuniya due to the high-handed behavior of the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam [PLOTE] members at Tandikkulam check post. Secretariat officials said the distribution of free dry ration to the immigrants in Kilinochchi District has been suspended. Although government agents for Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts have lodged a complaint to the government on extortion by the PLOTE, the government has declined take any action. The commissioner of essential services said he cannot do anything about the PLOTE extortion of money from the trucks at Tandikkulam checkpost and that officials concerned should deal with it. Officials have also asked the government to pay the money. As the distribution of relief material is hampered, the displaced people are facing great difficulties.

The Jaffna main post office has resumed operations. The post office, which was at the campus of the Chavakachcheri Hindu College for Women, were closed from 30 March due to the lack of space and curricular activities. It has resumed operations from a garage in front of the Chavakachcheri Hindu College since the day before yesterday.

The Jaffna Medical College hospital which is under military control appears deserted and even troops dread to move about here. Hospital sources have informed the Health Ministry that under these circumstances, it will be impossible for the doctors or employees from Colombo to go there and discharge their duties.

The Tigers' aspirations: motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Reports Attack on Troops Unit in Amparai

BK0904132096 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sri Lankan Special Task Force [STF] contingent in Amparai this morning was ambushed by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] commandos, suffering a major loss in the East. Sixteen STF commandos were killed on the spot in the assault which lasted only about 20 minutes. Others managed to escape with injuries as they could not face the LTTE, who chased and attacked them. The LTTE also seized some weapons in the attack.

Four valiant Tigers embraced martyrdom during this successful attack at 0750 today. Our tributes go to those valiant Tigers — Major Radheevan, Major Kannan, Captain Jaya, and Lieutenant Kattabomman — who dedicated themselves totally in the holy war to route the enemies from the soil of our motherland.

Reports say that there were fierce clashes between the LTTE and Sri Lankan troops at Chankanai and Chankarathai localities. A Sri Lankan military spokesman said five soldiers were killed and 16 others, including two officers, were seriously injured. However, so far, there is no report from the high command on this.

It may be recalled that the Sri Lankan Government has suspended military action in the North. The military's offensive on LTTE- controlled Velikamam is now in a quandary due to the constant LTTE barrage. Sri Lankan Government sources say the aim of the offensive was to flush out the Tigers from that locality first and then to launch a major military action as planned.

Meanwhile, the Government is adhering to its regular propaganda that a large number of Tigers have been killed and are being killed in its military operation in Velikamam. According to reports from there, several members of the families, which are under the clutches of the military, have been shot dead. Even the elderly are becoming victims of the horrible killing spree of the Sinhalese troops. It is reported that Tamils are being shot in retaliation for the humiliating defeats in the hands of LTTE in the East, Velikamam, or elsewhere.

The treaty between Sri Lanka and Switzerland to repatriate those denied refugee status in Switzerland, and which expired at the end of last year was renewed by the two countries last week. It is reported that this treaty will be in force for two years from 2 April.

Activities of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna [JVP — a Sinhalese terrorist organization] in the South have been revived, reports say, adding that the government is very concerned over it. A military officer said JVP supporters are making attempts to strengthen the organization. A Sri Lankan minister has said that the JVP'iers have been openly conducting classes to propagate their ideology. The editor of the Sinhalese paper, RAWAYA, said the current economic conditions are conducive for the garnering of support by JVP'iers.

The Tigers' aspirations: motherland of Tamil Eelam.

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